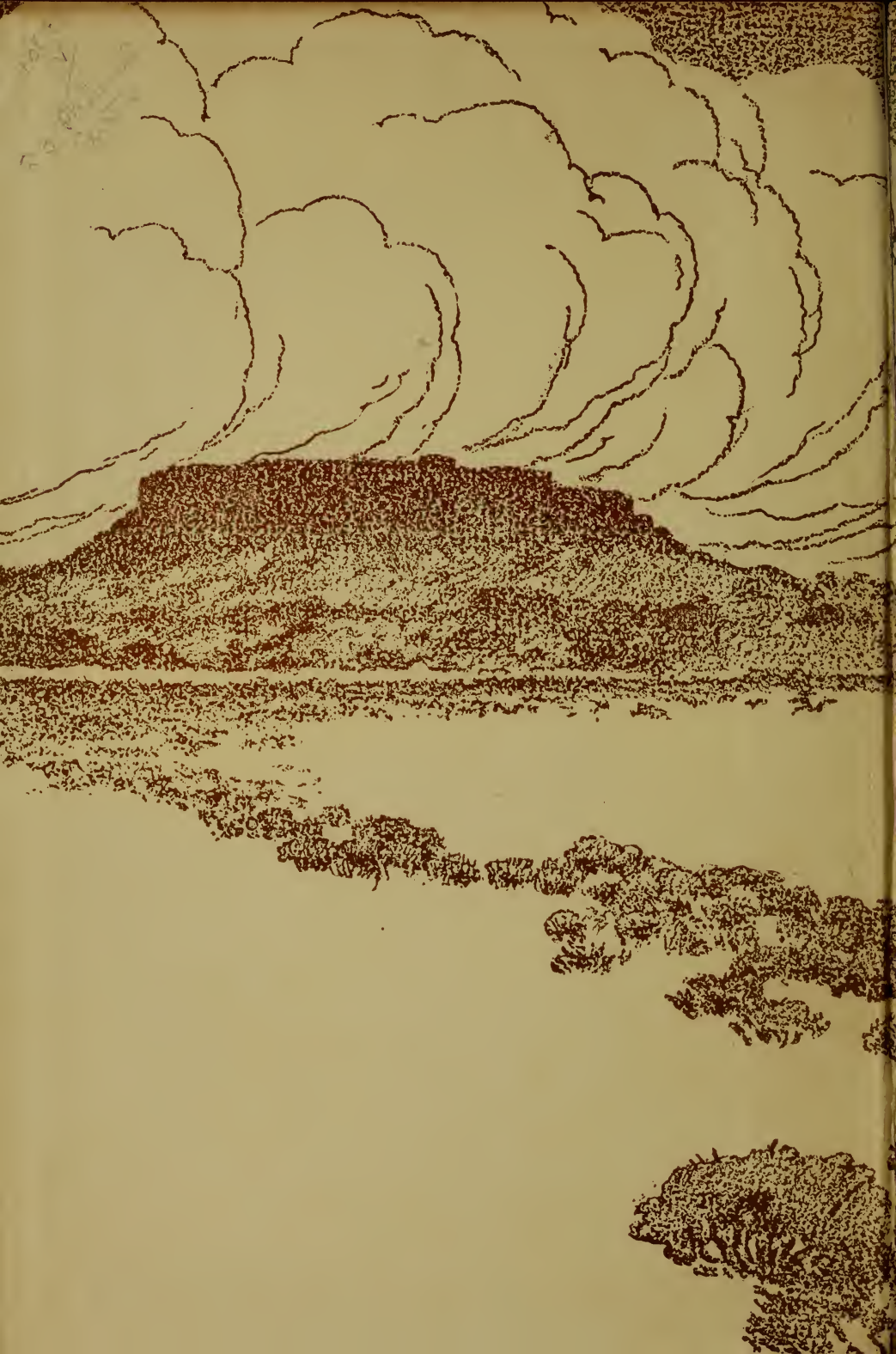
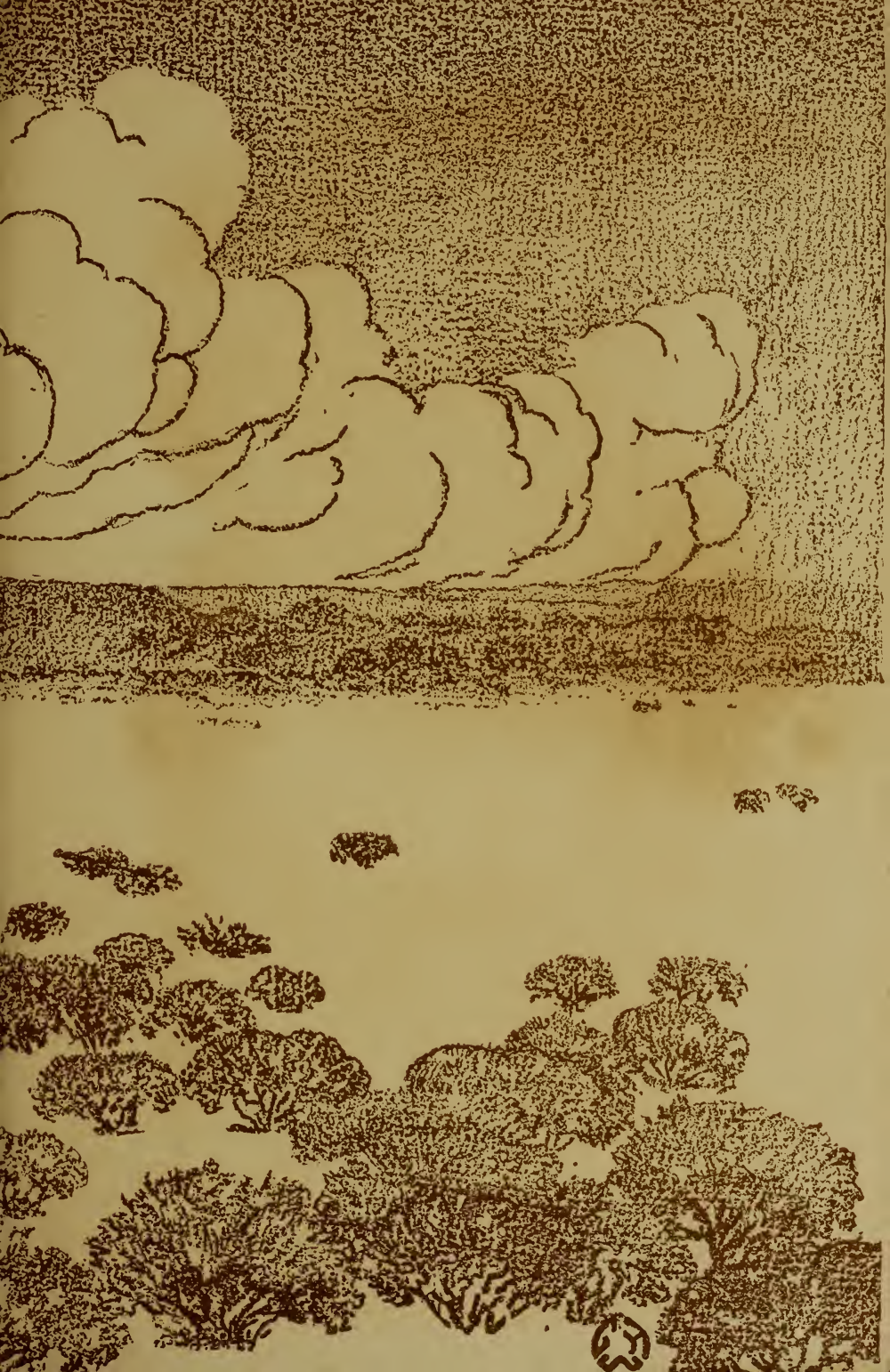
THE FLUTE OF THE GODS

MARAH ELLIS RYAN





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THE FLUTE OF THE GODS

B. G. Latimer
From Little Mother
Christmas

"By the Arrow I Have Said It!"

Page 120

THE FLUTE OF THE GODS

By

MARAH ELLIS RYAN

Author of "Told in the Hills" "Indian Love Letters," "The Soul of Rafael," etc., etc.

Illustrated by

EDWARD S. CURTIS

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PREFACE

In romances of the aborigines of the so-called New World there is usually presented savage man or woman modified as may be by the influence of European mythologies in various authorized forms. But, certain people of this New World possessed at least a semi-civilization centuries before the coming of white conquerors.

When man ceases to be nomadic, builds houses of stone and mortar, terrace upon terrace,— walled and fortressed against the enemy,— when he has fields of growing grain, textile fabrics, decorated pottery, a government that is a republic, a priesthood trained in complex ritual, a well stocked pantheon, a certain understanding of astronomy and psychic phenomena, he may withal be called barbarian, even as was Abraham on Moriah barbaric when the altar of his god called for sacrifice of his only son. But a people of such culture could not with truth be called savage.

The tale told here has to do with these same historic barbarians. That there is more of depth to the background of American Indian life than is usually suggested by historians has been made clear of two tribes by Dr. Le Plongeon in his *Sacred Mysteries of the Mayas and Quiches 11500 Years Ago.* Similar mysteries and secret orders exist to-day in the tribes of the Mexicos and Arizona. In certain instances the names and meanings of offices identical with those of Yucatan survive, to prove an ancient intercourse

between the Mayan tribes and those who now dwell in the valley of the Rio Grande. The Abbe Clavigero left account of a thousand years of the history of one tribe as transcribed by him from their own hieroglyphic records. Lord Kingsborough may have been far astray with his theory that the people of America were the Lost Tribes of Israel, but the researches embodied in his remarkable *Antiquities of Mexico,* demonstrated the fact that they were not a people of yesterday.

As to historic notes used in this tale of the more northern Sun worshipers: Cabeza de Vaca, the first European to cross the land from the Mississippi to Mexico (1528–1536), left record in Spanish archives of Don Teo the Greek. Casteñada, historian for the Coronado expedition (1540–1542), left reluctant testimony of the worse than weird night in one Indian town of the Rio Grande, when impress was left on the native mind that the strong god of the white conquerors demanded much of human sacrifice. In that journal is record also of the devoted Fray Luis, of whose end only the Indians know. In *Soldiers of the Cross* by Archbishop Salpointe, there is an account of a god-offering made in 1680 (after almost a century of European influences), warranting the chapter describing a similar sacrifice on the same shrine when the pagan mind was yet supreme and the call of the primitive gods a vital thing.

It is yet so vital that neither imported government nor imported creeds have quite stamped it out. Only the death of the elders and the breaking up of the clans can eradicate it. When that is done, the Latin and the Anglo-Saxon will have swept from the heart of the land, primitive, conservative cults ancient as the Druids.

With thanks to the Indian friends who have helped me, I desire especially to express my obligation to Edward S. Curtis, whose wonderful volumes of *The North American Indian* have been an inspiration, and whose Indian pictures for this book of mine possess a solid value in art and ethnology far beyond the mere illustration of text.

M. E. R.

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THE FLUTE OF THE GODS

THE FLUTE OF THE GODS

CHAPTER I

THE WOMAN FROM THE SOUTH

ALIKSAI! In Tusayan the people were living! It was the year after the year when the great star with the belt of fire reached across the sky. (1528.)

The desert land of the Hopi people stretched yellow and brown and dead from mesa to mesa. The sage was the color of the dust, and the brazen sky was as a shield made hard and dry by the will of the angry gods. The Spirit People of the elements could not find their way past that shield, and could not bear blessings to Earth children.

The rain did not walk on the earth in those days, and the corn stood still, and old men of the mesa towns knew that the starving time was close. In the kivas fasted the Hopi priests, the youth planted prayer plumes by the shrines of the dying wells, and the woman danced dances at sunrise, and all sang the prayers to the gods: — and each day the store of corn was lower, and the seed in the ground could not grow.

In the one town of Wálpi there were those who regretted the seed wasted in the planting,— it were better to have given it to the children, and even yet they might find some of it if the sand was searched carefully.

"Peace!" said old Ho-tiwa, the Ancient of the village, and the chief of Things of the Spirit. "It is not yet so bad as when I was a boy. In that starving time, the robes of rabbit skins were eaten when the corn was gone. Yet you see we did live and have grown old! The good seed is in the ground, and when the rain comes —"

"When it comes!" sighed one skeptic — "We wait one year now,— how many more until we die?"

"If it is that you die — the rain or the no rain makes no change — you die!" reminded the old man. "The reader of the stars and of the moon says a change is to come. Tell the herald to call it from the housetops. This night the moon is at the big circle — it may bring with it the smile of the glad god again. Tell the people!"

And as the herald proclaimed at the sunset the hopeful words of the priests who prayed in the kivas, old Ho-tiwa walked away from the spirit of discontent, and down the trail to the ruins of Sik-yat-ki. All the wells but that one of the ancient city were useless, green, stagnant water now. And each day it was watched lest it also go back into the sands, and at the shrine beside it many prayers were planted.

So that was the place where he went for prayer when his heart was heavy with the woe of his people. And that was how he found that which was waiting there to be found.

It was a girl, and she looked dead as she lay by the stones of the old well. As he bent over to see if she lived, the round moon came like a second sun into the soft glow of the twilight, and as it touched the face of the girl, the old man felt the wind of the south pass over them. Always to the day he died

THE ONE TOWN OF WÁLPI

did he tell of how that south wind came as if from swift wings!

He called to some men who were going home from rabbit hunting in the dusk, and they came and looked at the girl and at each other, and drew away.

"We have our own women who may die soon," they said: "Why take in a stranger? Whence comes she?"

No one had seen her come, but her trail was from the south. She wore the dress of a pueblo girl, but she was not of their people. Her hair was not cut, yet on her forehead she carried the mark of a soon-to-be maternity — the sacred sign of the piñon gum seen by Ho-tiwa when he went as a boy for the seed corn to the distant Te-hua people by the river of the east.

"I come here with prayer thoughts to the water," said the old man noting their reluctance,—"and I find a work put by my feet. The reader of the skies tells that a change is to come with the moon. It is as the moon comes that I find her. The gods may not be glad with us if our hearts are not good at this time."

"But the corn —"

"The corn I would eat can go to this girl for four days. I am old, but for so long I will fast,— and maybe then the gods will send the change."

So the girl was carried to his house, and the women shrank away, and were afraid — for the clouds followed the wind swiftly from the south, and the face of the moon was covered, and at the turn of the night was heard the voice of a man child — new born of the strange girl found by the well in the moonlight. Ho-tiwa in the outer room of the dwelling heard the

voice — and more than the child voice, for on the breath of the wind across the desert the good rain came walking in beauty to the fields, and the glad laughter of the people went up from the mesa, and there was much patter of bare feet on the wet stone floor of the heights — and glad calls of joy that the desert was to live again!

And within the room of the new birth the women stared in affright at the child and at each other, for it was most wonderfully fair — not like any child ever seen. This child had hair like the night, eyes like the blue of the sky, and face like the dawn.

One man among them was very old, and in his youth had known the Te-hua words. When the girl spoke he listened, and told the thing she said, and the women shrank from her when it was told.

"She must be a medicine-woman, for she knows these things," she said, "and these things are sacred to her people. She says that the blade of a sacrifice must mark her child, for the boy will not be a child as other children." And at the mention of the knife the people stared at each other.

"There is such a knife," said Ho-tiwa. "It belongs to the Ancient Days, and only the gods, and two men know it. It shall be as she says. The god of the sky has brought the woman and has brought the child, and on the face of the child is set the light of the moon that the Hopi people will never again doubt that the gods can do these things."

And there was a council at which all the old men talked through the night and the day. And while they talked, the rain poured in a flood from the gray sky, until men said this might be magic, for the woman might have brought witchcraft.

But the old chief said no evil craft could have brought the good rain:— The wind and the rain had come from the south as the girl had come from the south, and the light on the face of the child was a symbol that it was sacred.

Then one man, who had been an Apache prisoner, and found his way back, told of a strange thing; — that forty days to the south where the birds of the green feathers were, a new people had come out of the Eastern sea, and were white. The great kings made sacrifices for them, and planted prayer plumes before them — for they were called the new gods of the water and the sunrise.

And the girl had come from the south!

Yet another reminded the council that the words of the girl were Te-hua words, and the Te-hua people lived East of Ci-bo-la and Ah-ko — the farthest east of the stone house building people.

"Since these are her only words, the child shall be named in the way of that people," said Ho-tiwa. "The sacred fire was lit at the birth, and on the fourth morning my woman will give the name in the Te-hua way, and throw the fire to burn all evil from his path, and the sacred corn will guard his sleep. Some of you younger men never have heard of the great Te-hau god. Tell it to them, Atoki, then they will know why a Te-hua never sends away a poor stranger who comes to them."

The man who knew Te-hua words, and had seen the wonderful Te-hua valley in his youth, sent smoke from his ceremonial pipe to the four ways the gods, and then to the upper and nether worlds, and spoke:

"*Aliksai!* I will tell of the Te-hua god as it was

told to me by the old man of Kah-po in the time of starving when I went with the men for the sacred corn of the seed planting:

"The thing I tell is the true thing!

"It was time for a god to walk on the earth, and one was born of the piñon tree and a virgin who rested under the shadow of its arms. The girl was very poor, and her people were very poor; when the piñon nut fell in her bosom, and the winds told her a son was sent to her to rest beneath her heart, she was very sad, for there was no food.

"But wonderful things happened. The Spirits of the Mountain brought to her home new and strange food, and seeds to plant for harvest: — new seeds of the melon, and big seed of the corn: — before that time the seeds of the corn were little seeds. When the child was born, strange things happened, and the eagles fly high above till the sky was alive with wings. The boy was very poor, and so much a boy of dreams that he was the one to be laughed at for the visions. But great wise thoughts grew out of his mountain dreams, and he was so great a wizard that the old men chose him for Po-Ahtun-ho, which means Ruler of Things from the Beginning. And the dreamer who had been born of the maid and the piñon tree was the Ruler. He governed even the boiling water from the heart of the hills, and taught the people that the sickness was washed away by it. His wisdom was beyond earth wisdom, and his visions were true. The land of that people became a great land, and they had many blue stones and shells. Then it was that they became proud. One day the god came as a stranger to their village: — a poor stranger, and they were not kind to him! The proud hearts had grown to be hard hearts, and

only fine strangers would they talk with. He went away from that people then. He said hard words to them and went away. He went to the South to live in a great home in the sea. When he comes back they do not know, but some day he comes back,— or some night! He said he would come back to the land when the stars mark the time when they repent, and one night in seven the fire is lit on the hills by the villages, that the earth-born god, Po-se-yemo, may see it if he should come, and may see that his people are faithful and are waiting for him to come.

" Because of the day when the god came, and they turned him away for that his robe was poor, and his feet were bare; — because of that day, no poor person is turned hungry from the door of that people. And the old men say this is because the god may come any day from the South, and may come again as a poor man.

" And this was told to us by the Te-hua men when we went for seed corn in that starving time, and were not sent away empty. *Aliksai!*"

The men drew long breaths of awe and approval when the story was ended. The old man who had found the girl knew that the girl had found friends.

But the mysterious coincidence of her coming as the rain came — and from the south — and the fair child!

Again the man who had been a prisoner with the Apaches was asked to tell of the coming of the white gods in the south where the Mexic people lived. He knew but little. No Apache had seen them, but Indian traders of feathers had said it was so.

The men smoked in silence and then one said: — " Even if it be so, could the girl come alone so far through the country of the hostile people?"

"There is High Magic to help sometimes," reminded the old chief. "When magic has been used only for sacred things it can do all things! We can ask if she has known a white god such as the trader told of to our enemies."

And the two oldest men went to the house of Hotiwa's wife, and stood by the couch of the girl, and they sprinkled sacred meal, and sat in prayer before they spoke.

And the girl said, "My name is Mo-wa-thé (Flash Of Light) and the name of my son is Tahn-té (Sunlight). We may stay while these seeds grow into grain, and into trees, and bear harvest. But not always may we be with you, for a God of the Sky may claim his son."

And she took three seeds from the fold of the girdle she had worn. They were strange seeds of another land.

The old men looked at each other, and remembered that to the mother of the Te-hua god, strange seeds had been given, and they trembled, and the man of the Te-hau words spoke:

"You come from the south where strange things may happen. On the trail of that south, heard you or saw you — the white god?"

And she drew the child close, and looked in its face, and said, "Yes — a white god! — the God of the Great Star."

And the old men sprinkled the sacred meal to the six points, and told the council, and no one was allowed to question Mo-wa-thé ever again.

The seeds were planted near the well of Sik-yat-ki, and grew there. One was the tree of the peach, another of the yellow pear, and the grain was a grain of the wheat. The pear tree and the wheat could

not grow well in the sands of the desert, only enough to bring seed again, but the peach grew in the shadow of the mesa, and the people had great joy in it, and only the men of the council knew they came from the gods.

And so it was in the beginning.

CHAPTER II

THE DAY OF THE SIGN

MO-WA-THÉ,— the mother of Tahn-té, drew with her brush of yucca fibre the hair-like lines of black on the ceremonial bowl she was decorating. Tahn-té, slender, and nude, watched closely the deft manipulations of the crude tools; — the medicine bowls for the sacred rites were things of special interest to him — for never in the domestic arrangement of the homes of the terraces did he see them used. He thought the serrated edges better to look at than the smooth lines of the home dishes.

"Why can I not know what is that put into them?" he demanded.

"Only the Ancient Ruler and the medicine-men know the sacred thing for 'Those Above.'"

He wriggled like a beautiful bronze snake to the door and lay there, his chin propped on his hands, staring out across the plain — six hundred feet below their door — only a narrow ledge — scarcely the length of the boy's body: — divided the wall of their home from the edge of the rock mesa.

Mo-wa-thé glanced at him from time to time.

"What thoughts do you think that you lie still like a kiva snake with your eyes open?" she said at last.

"Yes, I think," he acknowledged with the gravity of a ceremonial statement, "These days I am thinking thoughts — and on a day I will tell them."

"When a boy has but few summers his thoughts are not yet his own," reminded Mo-wa-thé.

"They are here — and here!" his slender brown hand touched his head, and heart,— "How does any other take them out — with a knife? Are they not me?"

"Boy! The old men shall take you to the kiva where all the youth of the clan must be taught how to grow straight and think straight."

"Will they teach me there whose son I am?" he demanded.

Her head bent lower over the sacred bowl, but she made no lines. He saw it, and crept closer.

"Am I an arrow to you?" he asked —"sometimes your face goes strange like that, and I feel like an arrow,— I would rather be a bird with only prayer feathers for you!"

She smiled wistfully and shook her head.

"You are a prayer; — one prayer all alone," she said at last. "I cannot tell you that prayer, I only live for it."

"Is it a white god prayer?" he asked softly.

She put down the bowl and stared at him as at a witch or a sorcerer; — one who made her afraid.

"I found at the shrine by the trail the head you made of the white god," he whispered. "No one knows who made it but me. I saw you. I am telling not any one. I am thinking all days of that god."

"That?"—

"Is it the great god Po-se-yemo, who went south?" he whispered. "Do you make the prayer likeness that he may come back?"

"Yes, that he may come back!"

"My mother; — you make him white!"

She nodded her head.

"I am whiter than the other boys; — than all the boys!"

She picked up the bowl again and tried to draw lines on it with her unsteady fingers.

"And you talk more than all the boys," she observed.

"Did the moon give me to you?" he persisted. "Old Mowa says I am white because the moon brought me."

"It is ill luck to talk with that woman — she has the witch charm."

"When I am Ruler, the witches must live in the old dead cities if you do not like them."

Mo-wa-thé smiled at that.

"Yes, when you are Ruler. How will you make that happen?"

"All these days I have been thinking the thoughts how. If the moon brought me to you, that means that my father was not like others; — not like mesa men."

"No — not like mesa men!" she breathed softly.

Mo-wa-thé was very pretty and very slender. Tahn-té was always sure no other mother was so pretty,— and as she spoke now her dark eyes were beautified by some memory,— and the boy saw that he was momentarily forgotten in some dream of her own.

"No one but me shall gather the wood for the night fire to light Po-se-yemo back from the south lands," he said as he rose to his feet and stood straight and decided before his mother. "The moon will help me, and your white god will help me, and when he sees the blaze and comes back, you will tell him it was his son who kept the fire!"

He took from his girdle the downy feather of an

eagle, stepped outside to the edge of the mesa and with a breath sent it beyond him into space. A current of air caught it and whirled it upwards in token that the prayer was accepted by Those Above.

And inside the doorway, Mo-wa-thé, watching, let fall the medicine bowl at this added evidence that an enchanted day had come to the life of her son. Not anything he wanted to see could be hidden from him this day! Powerless, she knelt with bent head over the fragments of the sacred vessel — powerless against the gods who veil things — and who unveil things!

It was the next morning that Mo-wa-thé stood at the door of Ho-tiwa the Ancient one; — the spiritual head of the village.

"Come within," he said, and she passed his daughters who were grinding corn between the stones, and singing the grinding song of the sunrise hour. They smiled at her as she passed, but with the smile was a deference they did not show the ordinary neighbor of the mesas in Hopi land.

The old man motioned her to a seat, and in silence they were in the prayer which belongs to Those Above when human things need counsel.

Through the prayer thoughts echoed the last thrilling notes of the grinding songs at the triumph of the sun over the clouds of the dusk and the night.

Mo-wa-thé smiled at the meaning of it. It was well that the prayer had the music of gladness.

"Yes, I come early," she said. "I come to see you. The time is here."

"The time?"

"The time when I go. Always we have known it would be some day. The day is near. I take my son and go to his people."

"My daughter: — his people he does not know."

"My father: — no one but the winds have told him — yet he knows much! He has said to me the things by which I feel that he knows unseen things. I told him long ago that the stars as they touch the far mesa in the night are like the fires our people build to light our god back from the south. Yesterday he tells me he wants to be the builder of that fire and serve that god. My father in this strange land: — my son belongs to the clan whose duty it is to guard that fire! I never told him. Those Above have told him. I have waited for a sign. The gods have sent it to me through my son — we are to go across the desert and find our people."

"It is a thing for council," decided her host. "The way is far to the big river,— it is not good that you go alone. Men of Ah-ko will come when they hear us stamp the foot for the time of the gathering of the snakes. When they come, we will make a talk. If it is good that you go, you will find brothers who will show the trail."

"That is well;" and Mo-wa-thé arose, and stood before him. "You have been my brother, and you have been my father, and my son shall stay and see once more the rain ceremony of the Blue Flute people, and of the Snake people, and when he goes to his own land, he can tell them of the great rain magic of the Hopi Priests."

"He can do more than that," said the Ancient. "In council it has been spoken. Your son can be one of us, and the men of the Snake Order will be as brothers to him if ever he comes back to the mesa where the Sun Father and the Moon Mother first looked on his face. In the days of the Lost Others, all the people had Snake Power, as they had power

THE PRAYER TOKEN

of silent speech with all the birds, and the four-foot brothers of the forests. Only a few have not lost it, and the Trues send all their Spirit People to work with that few. Your son may take back to your people the faith they knew in the ancient days."

So it was that the boy watched the drama of the Flute people from the mesa edge for the last time. The circle of praying priests at the sacred well; virgins in white garments facing the path of the cloud symbols that the rain might come; — weird notes of the flute as the chanters knelt facing the medicine bowl and the sacred corn; then the coming of the racers from the far fields with the great green stalks of corn on their shoulders, and the gold of the sunflowers in the twist of reeds circling their brows. He did not know what the new land of his mother's tribe would bring him, but he thought not any prayer could be more beautiful than this glad prayer to the gods. Of that prayer he talked to Mo-wa-thé.

Then eight suns from that day, he went from his mother's home to the kiva of the Snake Priests, and he heard other prayers, and different prayers, and when the sun was at the right height, for four days they left the kiva in silence, and went to the desert for the creeping brothers of the sands. To the four ways they went, with prayers, and with digging-sticks. He had wondered in the other days why the men never spoke as they left the kiva, and as they came back with their serpent messengers for the gods. After the first snake was caught, and held aloft for the blessing of the sun, he did not wonder.

He had shrunk, and thought it great magic when the brief public ceremony of the Snake Order was given before the awe-struck people: — It had been a

matter of amaze when he saw the men he knew as gentle, kind men, holding the coiling snake of the rattles to their hearts and dance with the flat heads pressed against their painted cheeks.

But the eight days and nights in the kiva with these nude, fasting, praying men, had taught him much, and he learned that the most wonderful thing in the taming of the serpents was not the thing to which the people of the dance circle in the open were witness. He was only a boy, yet he comprehended enough to be awed by the strong magic of it.

And of that prayer of the serpents he talked not at all to Mo-wa-thé.

And the Ancient knew it, and said. "It is well! May he be a great man — and strong!"

From a sheath of painted serpent skin the Ruler drew a flute brown and smooth with age.

"Lé-lang-ûh, the God of the Flute sent me the vision of this when I was a youth in prayer," he said gently. "I found it as you see it long after I had become a man. On an ancient shrine uncovered by the Four Winds in a wilderness I found it. I have no son and I am old. I give it to you. Strange white gods are coming to the earth in these days, and in the south they have grown strong to master the people. I will be with the Lost Others when you are a man, but my words here you will not forget; — the magic of the sacred flute has been for ages the music of the growing things in the Desert. The God of the Flute is a god old as the planting of fields, and a strong god of the desert places. It may be that he is strong to lead you here once more to your brothers on some day or some night — and we will be glad that you come again. For this I give the flute of the vision to you. I have spoken. Lolomi!"

CHAPTER III

OF THE JOURNEY OF TAHN-TÉ

THE journey of Tahn-té to his mother's land of the East was the wonder journey of the world! There were medicine-men of Ah-ko for their guides, and the people were many who went along, so no one was afraid of the Navahu of the hill land.

And a new name was given to his mother. Ho-tiwa gave her the name, and put on her head the water of the pagan baptism to wash away that which had been. The new name was Sāā-hanh-que-ah and it meant the "Woman who has come out from the mists of a Shadow or Twilight Land." And they all called her by that name, and the men of Ah-ko regarded her with awe and with respect, and listened in silence when she spoke.

For the first time the boy saw beyond the sands of the desert, and in the high lands touched the running water of living springs, and scattered meal on it with his prayers, and bathed in the stream where green stems of rushes grew, and braided for himself a wreath of the tasselled pine.

"*Ai-ai!*" said his mother softly,—"to the people of my land the pine is known as the first tree to come from the Mother Earth at the edge of the ice robe on her bosom. So say the ancients, and for that reason is it sacred to the gods — and to the sacrifices of gods. Have you, my son, woven a crown of sacrifice?"

But Tahn-té laughed, and thrust in it the scarlet star blossom growing in the timber lands of the Navahu.

" If I am made sacrifice I will have a blood strong, living reason," he said, with the gay insolence of a young god walking on the earth.

But the older men did not smile at the bright picture he made with the blood-red stars in the green of his crown. They knew that even untried youth may speak prophet words, and they made prayers that the wise woman of the twilight land might not see the day when her son became that which he had spoken.

He carried with him a strange burden: — an urn or jar of ancient days dug from one of the buried cities of the Hopi deserts. On it was the circle of the plumed serpent, and the cross of red and of white. It was borne on his back by a netted band of the yucca fibre around his brow, and in it were young peach trees, and pear trees — the growing things of the mystic seeds given to the medicine-men of the Hopi the day of the boy's birth.

Seeds also were being carried, but it was the wish of the mother that her son carry the growing things into the great valley of the river Pō-sōn-gé.

Even into the great rift of the earth called Tzé-ye did he carry it, where the cliff homes of the Ancient Others lined the sides of the cañon and the medicine-men of Ah-ko spoke in hushed tones because of the echoing walls, and of the strong gods who had dwelt there in the days before men lived and died.

" The dead of the Ancient ones are hidden in many hollow places of the stone," explained one of the men who spoke the language of Te-hua people. " And it is good medicine for the man who can walk be-

Blood-Red Stars in the Green of His Crown

tween these walls where the Divine Ones of old made themselves strong. You do not fear?"

"I do not fear," said Sāā-hanh-que-ah, the woman of the twilight, "and my son does not fear. Before he was born to the light of the Sun Father, I made the trail from the level land of the west where the snow is, to the deep heart of the world where the plants have blossoms in winter time, and the birds sing for summer. Beside it this deep step down from the world above is like the thickness of your finger against the height of a tall man."

The men stared at her in wonder, and Tahn-té listened, but could not speak when the older men were silent.

"There is such a place," said the oldest of the men. "It is to the sunset. The water comes strong there, and it is a place of the gods, as this place is. And you have seen it with your eyes?"

"I have seen it, and the water that is so strong looks from the top like this reed of this ancient dwelling place," said Sāā-hanh-que-ah, and she pointed to the waving slender lattice grass of the cañon.

"I have heard of it, but our people do not cross it in these days," said the old man. "Our friends the Te-huas cross it — and cross a desert beyond when they go to the Love Dance of the Chinig-Chinik who live by the sunset sea. In my youth I thought to go, but old age is here and I have not yet seen it." Then after an inteval of thoughtful silence he said: — "You have crossed that river in the heart of the world — I did not know that women went to the Love Dance."

"I can not tell you. I also do not know," said Sāā-hanh-que-ah quietly, and the boy saw that the

eyes of all the men were directed strangely to his mother. "I do not belong to the Order from which the people are sent to the Dance of Love or the Dance of Death. My eyes have not seen the waters of the sunset sea."

"Then you did not go beyond the river in the heart of the rocks?" asked the old man. "You did not cross over?"

"I did cross over. I have seen the sands of that far desert of which you speak. I have seen the trees of which one leaf will cover a man from the sun, and more leaves will make a cover for a dwelling. I have seen the water run there at the roots of those trees as this water runs in the shadow of this rock, and — ai! — ai-ah! I have seen it sink in the sands when it was needed most — and have heard it gurgle its ghost laugh beneath the hot trail where the desert lost one wandered."

Her head bent forward and her hands covered her eyes. The boy wanted to ask where this place was of which he was hearing so much for the first time. What was there in the wonderful journey of the wise woman to make the tears come and her voice tremble? But the old Shaman of Ah-ko reached out his hand and touched her bent head.

"It is true, my daughter of the Te-hua, that the Snake priest of the Hópitû told in council that high medicine was yours. Yet all he could not tell me. You have lived much, oh woman! Yet your heart is not hard, and your thoughts run clear as the snow water of the high hills. It is well that you have come with us, and that you have talked with us. When the hidden water mocks with laughter so far beneath the desert sand that no man lives to reach it: — then it is that men die beside the place their

bleeding hands dig deep. You have heard that laughter, and have lived, and have brought back your child out of the sands of death. It has given you the medicine for your son that is strong medicine. You have lived to walk with us and that is well."

"Yes, thanks this day, it is well," said the other men.

At Ah-ko, "the city of the white rock," the silent, shy Medicine-Woman of the Twilight and her son were feasted like visiting rulers of a land.

To his wonder they sang songs of thanks that the gods had left her come to them once again, and they asked that she make prayers with them.

The woman with whom the rain and the sweet fruit had come to the far desert was a woman to be feasted and propitiated — all the more that she disclaimed aught of the divine for herself; but when they spoke of her son she was silent. His life was his own in which to prove what he might be.

Here he saw no girls with the head bands for their burden of water bottles as in Tusayan. He saw instead the beautifully poised vases on the heads of the women while they paced evenly over the rock of the mesa or the treacherous sand hills, and the great walled reservoir of shining green water was a constant source of delight to him. Eight times the height of a man was the depth of it, and at the very bottom in an unseen crevice was the living spring pulsing out its heart for the long line of women who brought their decorated jars to be filled.

The evening of their arrival he found his mother there in the shadow of the high rock walls.

"Are you sad, my mother, that you walk alone and sit in the shadow?" he asked, but she shook her head.

"I come because this place of the deep water is precious to me," she said. "Make your prayer here, my son, make your prayer for the people who thirst in the desert of this earth life. There are many deserts to cross, and the enchanted hills and the enchanted wells of content are but few on the trail."

He made the prayer, and scattered the sacred pollen of the corn to the four ways, and again took up his query.

"The enchanted mesa Kat-zi-mo I have seen and already the men have told me its story," he said. "But of this well there is no story except that in the ages ago the water was brought high with the wall, and when the Apache enemies came, the people could not starve for water even while the fighters fought a long time. That is all the story — there is no magic in that."

"There is always magic in the waters of the desert," and the Woman of the Twilight. "One other time I drank of the water of this well. It was enchanted that time, for every moving light and shadow on its face have I remembered all the days and all the nights. Give me to drink of it now with your own hands, and it will be then precious for two reasons."

He did as she said, and wanted to ask of that other time and could not.

"Thanks this day, thanks for my son," she said and sprinkled water to the four ways and drank. "Not again shall I see you — oh joy place in the desert! Give your magic to my son that he may carry it to the free running water of his own land!"

In Tusayan his mother had been to him Mo-wa-thé, the pottery maker who made the finest of all vessels, but on the wonder trail in the new lands he found that she was strangely learned. And when she spoke of

the place of the well on the high mesa and said it was precious for magic there, he walked silent and awed beside her, for the magic world held the Great Mystery, and only through prayer must it be spoken.

He knew that his lot was more fortunate than that of any other boy alive, an the long trail where each night around the camp fire the men told tales of the Ancient days when gods walked on the earth and taught wisdom to the people. Each tribe had its own sacred truths given by its own gods, and he was learning of many. In the great cañon of Tzé-ye — the abiding place of the Navahu Divine Ones, he had heard with awe of the warrior boy gods who were born of the Sun and of the Goddess Estsan-atlehi and set out to slay the terrific giants of evil in the world. But the medicine-men of Ah-ko were quite sure that the Ancient Ones of their own race had proof that the Supreme Power is a master mind in a woman's form. It is the thing which thinks and creates, and her twin sister is the other mind which only remembers. Prayers must not be said to the goddess who only remembers — but many prayers belong to the goddess who creates. And the most beloved of all is the goddess E-yet-e-ko (Mother Earth) who nourishes them all their days. He learned that they planted their corn and their cotton by the stars and the plum blossoms, in the way his mother said they did by the river of her land, also that the great bear of the stars was called by them the great animal of cold weather, and that the Sun had eight children, or wandering stars in the sky.

He heard many more things, but the wisdom of it was too deep for a boy to know, and the words of the symbols were new, and not for his understanding. How big — how very big the world of the Tusayan

desert had seemed to him as he stood on the mesa of Wálpi and looked to the south where old Awatabi (the high place of the Bow) stood in its pride, and rugged Mishongnavi with her younger sister Shupaulevi against the sky, so beautiful, that the sacred mountain Dokoslid of the far away, looks sometimes like a cloud back of those villages, and sometimes like the shell of the big water from which its name was taken.

But all those wonderful Hopi mesas with their fortresses on each, were within the running time of a morning, and not in any of them were there forests or living streams, or strange new things. Only the clouds and the shadow of the clouds on the sand,— or the sun and the glory of the sun on the world, made the heart leap with the beauty of the land of the Hopi people. But here were new things each day.

When the boys of Ah-ko in friendly rivalry ran races and leaped great spaces, and shot arrows into a melon with him — and then ate the melon! — they asked how many years he had lived and he laughed and did not know.

" I had so many," he said holding up the fingers of both hands and pointing to his eyes,—" When I followed your men down the trail from Wálpi in Hopi land. But I have seen so much, and lived so much that I must be very old now! "

This the boys thought a great jest, and said since he was old he could not run races, or see straight to shoot, and he must let himself be beaten. But the boys who tried to beat him were laughed at by the old men who watched, and he was given a very fine bow to take on his journey, and never any boy crossed those lands so joyously as he who carried all the way the growing sprouts of the new trees.

And at Ah-ko a little tree from the urn, and some of the seeds were given, but the winter to come was a hard winter, and the ice killed them, so the fruit from the strange far-off trails was not for Ah-ko.

They had rested, and were about to depart, when Tahn-té, watching with other boys the war between two eagles poised high above the enchanted mesa, saw on the plain far below the figure of an Indian runner, his body a dark moving line against the yellow bloom spread like a great blanket of flowers from Mount Spin-eh down and across the land.

He only watched because the man ran well — almost as well as a Hopi — and did not see in the glistening bronze body the herald of a new day in the land.

At the edge of the cliff they watched to see him appear and disappear in the length of the great stairway of the fortress. Some day each boy among them would also be a runner in his turn for ceremonial reasons, and it is well to note how the trusted men make the finish.

It is not easy to run up the two hundred foot wall of Ah-ko at the end of a long trail, but this man, conscious of watchers, leaped the last few steps and stood among them. Only an instant he halted, in surprise face to face with the boy Tahn-té who stood nude and fair beside dark companions.

Tahn-té was accustomed to the curious regard of strangers who visited the country of Tusayan. He had heard so often that he was a child of the sky that this explanation of his fairer skin seemed to him a very clear and logical explanation of the case.

But after the runner had been listened to by the governor and fed, and a herald from the terraced housetop had called aloud the startling message

brought by him to the people of Ah-ko, the boy went away from the other boys, and wrinkled his brows in boyish thought, and stared across to the ancient crater of Se-po-chineh until his mother sought him, and found him.

"You are weary, my son, that you come alone from the others?"

"The others only talk yet tell nothing," he said gloomily, "and of that which the runner tells I wish to hear much. You hear what he says of white men like gods who come from the south searching for the blue stones and the stone of the sun fire, and taming strange beasts to carry them on their way?"

"Yes, it is true, I hear," she said.

"And you think it is magic? Is it that they are gods — or demons — or men like these men?"

"If they were gods would they not know where the stones of the sunlight are hidden in the earth?"

"Are they children of the moon or the sun, or the stars that they are white?" he demanded.

"It may be so," she said very lowly, conscious that his gloomy eyes were trying to make her see what he felt, but she must not see, and she spoke with averted head.

Then he rose and stood erect and stretched out his arms their widest and surveyed himself with measuring gaze and a certain pride, but the other thought came back with its gloom and he laughed shortly with disdain of himself.

"I have felt stronger than all the boys — always! Do you know why that has been? I know now why — it was because I stood alone,— I was the only child of the light and I dreamed things of that. Now a man tells us there are many such people, and

their magic is great, and my strength goes because of the many!"

His mother stroked his hand reassuringly. "Na-vin (my own)," she said steadily. "I have felt your dreams, and I also dream them. Fear no one born of the light or of the darkness, and when you are a man you will have all your strength — and more than your own strength."

"You say that, my mother?"

She held her head erect now and looked straight and steadily into the eyes of her son.

"I say it!"

And he remembered that it was more than his mother who spoke, it was the Medicine Woman of the Twilight and of the strange places, and the far off thoughts.

He lifted her hand and breathed on it. "I am again Tahn-té," he said, and smiled. "You make me find myself!"

CHAPTER IV

WHITE SEEKERS OF TREASURE

WHEN Alvarado marched his band of adventurers into the pueblo Ua-lano to the sound of tom-toms and flutes of welcome, an Indian woman with a slender boy stood by the gate and watched the welcome of the strangers.

An exceedingly reckless, rakish lot they were — this flower of the Mexican forces who the Viceroy was only too willing should explore all lands, and seas, so they kept themselves away from the capitol.

The women and the children shrank back as the horses clattered in. Some laughed to cover their fear, others threw prayer meal, and their fright made the commander notice the blanketed figure of the woman whose eyes alone shone above the draperies held close, and who stared so keenly into each white face as they passed.

"Who is the dame in the mask of the blanket?" he asked of his host Chief Bigotes — the courteous barbarian who had crossed seventy leagues of the desert to ask that his village be honored by the god-like ones from the south.

Bigotes looked at her, did not know, but after inquiring came back and spoke.

"It is a strange thing but it is true," said the interpreter, "she is called the One from the Twilight Land. She went as a girl from Te-hua to Ah-ko for study with the medicine people of one order there.

One night it was as if she go into the earth, or up in the sky. No one ever see her any more. It was the year of the fire of the star across the sky. Now she comes from the west and so great a medicine woman is she that leading men are sent to guard her on the trail to the Te-hua people — and to guard her son."

"Faith! Your strangers are a handsome pair. The boy would make a fine page in a civilized land. He is the fairest Indian I've seen."

The boy knew that his mother and himself were objects of query, and stood stolid, erect and disdainful,— the stranger should see that all their clanking iron, their dominating swagger, and their trained animals could not make him move an eyelash of wonder.

But to his mother he said:

"They have much that we will need if we ever fight them; their clanking clothes and shields can break many arrows."

"Why do you talk of fighting?"

"I do not know why. It is all I thought of as I looked at them."

One thing interested him more than all else, and that was a man in a grey robe who carried a book, and turned the pages in absorbed meditation; sometimes his reading was half aloud, and Tahn-té slipped near each time he could, for to him it looked as if the man talked to the strange white paper.— He thought it must be some sort of high magic, and of all he saw in the new comers, he coveted most of the contents of those pages,— it was more wonderful than the clanging metal of their equipment.

A tiny elf-like girl followed Tahn-te as a lost puppy would, until he asked her name, and was told it was Yahn — that she lived in Povi-whah by the big river and that her mother was visiting some society of

which she was a member,— that she was in the kiva and could not be seen for four days and nights, and in the coming of the beasts and the strangers, her caretaker had lost her, and the home where she had stayed last night she did not know.

She knew only she was lost, and some boys had told her that the new kind of beasts ate little girls. She did not weep or call, but she tried to keep her little nude body out of sight behind Tahn-té if a horse or a mule turned its head in the direction she was.

So glad she was to be protected that she told him all her woes in the strange town. The greatest was that a dog had taken from her hand the roasted ear of corn she had been eating, and she wished Ka-yemo was there, he would have maybe killed the dog.

Inquiry disclosed the fact that Ka-yemo was not her brother; he lived in Provi-whah. Her own name was Yahn. No: — it was not a Te-hua name. It was Apache, for her mother was Apache — and the Te-hua men had caught her when they were hunting, and always her mother had told Yahn to stay close to the houses, for hunting enemies might bear her away into slavery — and Yahn was not certain but these men on the beasts might be hunters.

She was very tiny, and she spoke imperfectly, but shyness was not a part of her small personality, and she insisted on making herself understood. To Tahn-té she seemed like a boy rather than a girl, and he called her Pa-ah-dé which is the Te-hna word for "brother"— and later he gave her to his mother to keep her out of the way of the horses and the strange men.

And thus it was that Tahn-té, and Apache Yahn saw together the strange visitors from the south, and Yahn, though but a baby, thought they might be

hunters whom it would be as well to hide from, and Tahn-té thought much of the coats of mail, and how lances could be made to pierce the joints.

He heard the name of the man with the black robe and the magic thing of white leaves from which he talked — or which talked to him! — it was "Padre" — there was also another name and it was "Luis." It meant the same as "Father Ho-tiwa" or "Brother Tahn-té."

To the man from whom the rakish Spanish soldiers bent the knee and removed the covering from the head, Tahn-te felt no antagonism as he did for the men who carried the arquebus and swords. The man who is called "Father" or the woman who is called "Mother" with the Indian people, is a person to whom respect is due, and through Bigote he had heard — by keeping quiet as a desert snake against a wall — that the man of the grey robe who was called "Father" was the great medicine-man of the white tribe. Through him the god of the white man spoke. In the leaves of the white book were recorded this god's laws, and even these white men who were half gods, and had conquered worlds beyond the big water of the South, and of the East, bent their knees when the man of the robe spoke of the sacred things.

Of these things he spoke to his mother, and was amazed to learn that she knew of the white man's gods, and the white men's goddess. Never had she talked to him of this, and she did not talk to him much now. She only told him that all she knew would belong to him when the time came, and that the time seemed coming fast — but it was not yet. When he was older he could know.

When he talked to her of the many white pages in

which the white god had written, she told him that much wisdom — and strong magic must be there. The white men had no doubt stolen for their earth-born god the birth story of Po-se-yemo, the god of her own people. But his magic had been great in that land across the seas and that people had written words of the earth-born god as had certain tribes of Mexico, and all that the god said and did had been written plainly as had been written the records of Quetzel-coatle of the South, and it was not good that their own tribe had not the written records of their gods.

"It may be that the time has come to make such records," said Tahn-té, "our people should not be behind the other people."

"We have no written words,"— said his mother; —"our head men who govern have only the deerskin writings of Ki-pah the wise, who lived long ago and did much for the people of Kah-po and Oj-ke, and the people of the river."

"Of him I have not heard," said Tahn-té —"was he a god?"

"No — no god, but he lived and worked as a god. He came to this land before the day of my grandfathers. When the time is come, the men of my father's people will tell you the work he did in our valley, and what he said. So will tell you the old men of Provi-whah and the old men of Kah-po. He came to a land, not to one people, and on the deerskin he painted things never seen but by the wise men who know how to read it."

The boy stared moodily into the sun swept court of Ua-lano. There were so many things in the world of which no one had ever told him!

"If I am very good, and say very many prayers, and wait on the gods very carefully, will the wise men

of the medicine orders tell me of the deerskin records some day?" he demanded.

"Some day — it may be so," she conceded.

"Good! I will think of that each day as the sun comes up!" he stated. "And the magic of the white man's writings I will learn for myself. It is a thing which is not kept for sacred places, and no prayers are needed for that!"

The woman of mystery regarded him strangely, yet spoke no word. The magic of the white conquerors was wonderful magic to her, yet she could not ask her son why he only spoke of them as ever beyond some wall which they must not cross,— and of their knowledge as strong knowledge, yet not sacred knowledge.

Between the woman and her son there was often a wall of silence. Even her love could not cross it. There were always spoken or unspoken questions which she left without answers. He was only learning this in the wonderful journey of the desert lands, and he asked fewer questions,— but looked at her more. And: — she knew that also!

The man of the talking white leaves, and the grey gown set in the center of the court a white cross, and all the soldiers knelt, and in front of the dwellings the brown people knelt also — which the Christians deemed a special dispensation that so many heathen had been brought so quickly to their knees at the mere sight of the holy symbol. And in the morning Father Luis decided he would baptize all of them, and have a high mass for the salvation of their souls, The boy who watched the book so closely, was, he felt sure, a convert at mere sight of the white leaves, and the heathen mother would no doubt clamor also for sanctification.

But in the early dusk of the morning the boy and his mother were on the trail for the home valley of the river Pō-sōn-gé of which he had dreamed. With them were people of Kah-po, and people of Provi-whah and the Apache woman and her child Yahn. Yahn made some one carry her most of the hard trails, and talked much, and asked many things of the little growing trees in the old urn of ancient Tusayan.

And when they came in sight of the sacred mesa, Tuyo, a runner was sent ahead to tell the governor and the head men of the strange new people of the clanking iron at Ua-lano, and the wonderful and belated home-coming of the lost woman of many years' mystery.

Because of this they were met at the edge of the mesa by many, and the Woman of the Twilight knelt and touched the feet of the governor and asked that the gate of the valley be open to her and to her son. And Tahn-té knelt also and offered the growing things.

"These are sacred things of which the Ruler must speak," said the governor. "I am but for one short summer and winter, but the Ruler is for always. Of the new things to bear fruit we still speak in council, — also of the new people trading a new white god for blue stones, and painted robes."

But Tahn-té knew that a welcome was theirs, for the governor would not have come outside the walls except it had been so, and the old man watched keenly the delight of the boy as the river of that land came clear before him spread at the foot of the wide table land, and the great plain below. Trees grew there, and between them the running water shone in the sun. The Black Mesa Tuyo, Mesa of the Hearts, arose

from the water edge,— a great dark monument of mystic rites, and wondrous records of the time when it had been a breathing place for the Powers in the heart of the earth. The rocks were burned so red it always seemed that the fire was still under them. And south was the God-Maid mesa: — its outline as the face of a maid upturned to the sky.

Beyond the river stretched the yellow corn fields — the higher land like a rugged red skeleton from which the soil had been washed,— and beyond that was the great uplift of the pine-clad mountains where the springs never failed, and the deer were many.

Wild fowl fluttered and dove in the waters of the river, grey pigeons flew in little groups from the trail; as they walked, two men in canoes caught fish where a little stream joined the big water of Pō-sōn-gé — in every direction the boy was conscious of a richer, fuller life than any he had yet seen. His mother was right — her people were a strong people! and their villages were many in the valleys of the river.

In Povi-whah the clan of the Arrow Stone people welcomed the Twilight Woman as their own, and the men and women who had journeyed with her from Ua-lano looked glad to have journeyed with her,— they had to answer many questions.

Tahn-té also had much practise in the Te-hua words when he tried to tell them what the peach was like, and what the pear was like, and the youth were skeptical as to peaches big as six plums.

A boy larger than he flipped with a willow wand at the urn with the little trees, and told him that in Provi-whah a boy was whipped if he lied too often!

"How many times may a boy lie and not be whipped?" asked Tahn-té, and the other boys

laughed, and one stripling gave him a fillet of otter skin in approval, and said his name was Po-tzah, and that their clan was the same.

But the tiny Yahn who looked from face to face, and saw the anger in the face of the boy of the willow wand, caught the switch and brought it down with all the force of her two chubby arms on the nurslings brought from Hopi land.

Tahn-té caught her and lifted her beyond reach of the urn.

"I should have let the strange beasts of the iron men eat you," he said. "You shall go hungry for peaches if you kill the trees!"

The others laughed as she wriggled clear — and lisped threats even while keeping out of range of his strong hands.

"Always she is a little cat of the hills to fight for Ka-yemo," said Po-tzah. "Little Ka-yemo will some day grow enough to fight alone!"

Ka-yemo scowled at them, and muttered things, and sauntered away. He was the largest of all of them, but one boy does not fight six!

Yahn was in such a silent rage that she twitched and bent the willow until it was no longer any thing but a limp wreck: — she would break something!

"That is the Apache!" said Po-tzah. "I think that baby does not forget to fight even when she sleeps."

The little animal flung an epithet at him and ran after the sulky Ka-yemo: — evidently her hero and idol.

The mother of Tahn-té was called in council for things of which Tahn-té was not to know. But he learned that she was of the society of the Rulers: — that from which the spiritual head was selected when

the Po-Ahtun-ho or Ruler no longer walked on the earth.

After the council sacred meal was sprinkled on the trees in the urn, and the priests of the order of Po-Ah-tun divided them between the Winter people, and the Summer people, that it be proven which the care of the new fruit would belong to for prayers, and each planted them by their several signs in the sky. His mother spoke to him when alone and told him he was now to do a boy's work in the village, and his training must begin for the ceremonies of high orders into which the council wished him to enter.

"To serve our people?"

"Yes: — it will be so — to serve our people."

"Since it is to be like that, may I also speak?"— he asked. "May I not speak to the men who decide? I have thought of this each day since Ua-lano. At some time I must speak: — is not this the time?"

"It may be the time," she assented. "We will go to the old men of the orders. It may be they will listen."

All night they listened, and all night they talked, and the old men looked at the mother strangely that the son should speak the words of a man in council.

"Thanks that you let me speak," he said. "Thanks! It is true what you hear of the white gold-hunter's magic. It is strong. It is good that we find out how it is strong. My mother tells you how the Snake priests of Tusayan make me of their order, so that I can know that magic for the rain ceremony. In my hands also was given the Flute of Prayer to the desert gods, and to know Hopi prayers does not hurt me for a Te-hua: — it is Te-hua prayers my mother teaches me always! So it will not hurt me to learn the magic of the men of iron. They are

strong and they will be hard to fight. The grey robe man is the man who teaches of their gods. He teaches it from magic white leaves in his hand, on the leaves there are words — other iron men can talk from them, but only the grey robe is the priest and teaches. He would teach me if I would serve him — then I could have their magic with our own."

"It may be evil magic," said one.

"It tames the strange beasts as the Hopi prayers tame the snakes," replied the boy —"and every day the beasts do work for these people."

The old men nodded assent — it certainly must be strong magic to do that!

But a man of the Tain-tsain clan arose.

"This woman has been gone many moons on a strange trail," he said. "The son she brings back to her clan speaks not as a youth speaks. It is as if he has been very old and grows young again. It may be magic — and again it may be that he is half lost in his mind and dreams the dreams of a man. It is a new thing that men listen to a child in council."

Then Kā-ye-fah the aged Po-Ahtun-ho made a sign for silence, and sat with closed eyes, and it was very quiet in the council until he spoke.

"You have brought a big thought out of the world of the Spirit People, Phen-tza," he said. "It has been given to you to say, and that is well! It has been given to me to see — and I see with prayer. When the God-thought is sent to earth people is it not true that the child of dreams, or the man of dreams, is the first to hear or to feel that thought? Was not the earth-born god, Po-se-yemo, called a youth that was foolish? Was he not laughed at by the clans until he wept? Was he not made ashamed until out of his pain there grew a wisdom greater than earth-

wisdom? Let us think of these things, and let us hear the words of the child who dreams."

"It is well," said another, "even when half the mind is gone, it may be gone only a little while on the twilight trail to the Great Mystery.

"The life music comes in many ways," said Kā-ye-fah, the Ruler. "Many reeds grow under the summer sun, but not in all of them do we hear the call of the spirit people when the wild reed is fashioned for the flute. The gods themselves grow the flutes of High Mystery. This youth is only a reed by the river to-day — yet through such reed the gods may send speech for our ears."

"We will listen," said the others. "Let us hear more of the men whose blankets are made of the hard substance." And at this Tahn-té again took courage and spoke.

"These iron men say they are only on a hunting trail — they say they will not trouble the people — that is what their men say who speak for them! But if one boy, or one man, could talk as they talk, you men of Povi-whah would know better if they speak straight. My mother has found the trail to her people on the right day, and has brought me here. I want to be the boy who learns that talk of the hunters of the blue stones and sacred sun metal of the earth, and then I can come back and tell it to the wise men of my mother's people."

"But you may not come back."

"I will ask all the Powers that I will come back. My mother will pray also, and her prayers are strong."

"I will pray also," said Sāā-hanh-que-ah.

The men smoked, and the boy watched them and waited until Kā-ye-fah spoke.

"That which the son of this wise woman says is to be well thought of; — it may be precious to us in days not yet born of the sun. You who listen know that we are living now in a day that was told of by Ki-pah in the years of our Lost Others, and Ki-pah spoke as the god Po-se-yemo spoke: — he was given great magic to see the years ahead of the years he lived."

"It is true," assented the governor —"It was when the people yet lived in the caves, and the water went into the sands in that highland — that is when he came to our Lost Others — Ki-pah — the great wisdom. He came from the south, and taught them to come down from the caves and build houses by the great river, and to turn the water to the fields here. All things worked with him — and Kah-po — and Oj-ke and Pō-ho-gé were built and stand to this day where he said they must be built. He knew all speech, and could tell magic things from a bowl of clear water. It was in the water he saw men who were white, and who would cover the land if we were not strong. These men are the men he saw in the water. I think it is so, and that this is the time to be strong."

CHAPTER V.

TAHN-TÉ AMONG STRANGERS

THE one thing to which the boy gave awed attention was that when the time came for the villages to fight — a leader would be born to them — if the people of the valley were true to their gods they would be strong always, Kipah the prophet told them to remember always the war star in the sky — the star Po-se-yemo had told them of, when it moved, the time to make war would be here.

And when the time came to fight, a leader would come to them, as he, Ki-pah had come! Because of this thought was the heart of the boy thrilled that he had been called a reed by the river — a reed through which music of the desert gods might speak.

He was filled with wild fancies of mystic things born of these prophecies. And the old men said that perhaps this was the time of which Po-se-yemo, the god, and Ki-pah, the prophet, had told!

The vote of a Te-hua council has to be the agreement of every man, and the star of the morning brought dawn to the valley before the last reluctant decided it was well to send a messenger to learn of the strange gods.

But as the sun rose Tahn-té bathed in the running water of the river, and his prayer was of joy: — for he was to go!

In joy, and with the light of exaltation in his face he said farewell to boy thoughts, and walked lightly over the highlands and the valleys to Ua-lano, and

thence followed the adventurers to Ci-cu-yé and bent the knee to Father Luis, and kissed the cross, and let water be sprinkled over him, and did all the things shown him with so glad a heart that the devoted priest gave praise for such a convert from the pagan people. So pleased was he with the eagerness of Tahn-té to learn, that he made him his own assistant at the ceremonies of the Holy Faith.

And after each one, the boy washed his hands in running water, and scattered prayer meal to the gods of the elements, and to the Sun Father God, and knew that in Provi-whah his mother was praying also that he be not harmed by the god of the gold hunters — and that he come back strong with the white man's magic.

The boy Ka-yemo of the Tain-tsain clan was also sent — but neither boy was told of the quest of the other. The old men decided it was better so. Without pay they went with the Spanish adventurers, one serving the men of arms and learning the ways of the strange animals, and the other serving the priests and learning the symbols of the strangers' creed of the one goddess, and two gods, and many Go-hē-yahs, called saints by the men of the iron clothes.

They both saw many strange things in Ci-cu-yé, and they saw the strange Indian slave, whom the old men of Ci-cu-yé instructed to lead the men of iron from their land with the romance of Qui-ve-ra. And the slave did it, and told the strangers of the mythic land of gold and gems, and lost his life in the end by doing so, but the life of the romance was more enduring than any other thing, and the spirit of that treasure search still broods over the deserts and the mountains of that land.

But the stay of Ka-yemo was not even the length of

the first winter with the strangers. For in Tigeux where the great captain (Coronado) wintered, and made his comfort by turning the natives out of their houses, there was a season of grievous strife ere the Spring came, and the two boys of Te-hua saw things unspeakable as two hundred Indians of the valley, captured under truce, were burned at the stake by the soldiers of the cross.

One of the reasons for the crusade to the north as written in the chronicles of Christian Mexico was to save the souls of the heathen for the one god,— and his advocates were sending the said souls for judgement as quickly as might be!

Tahn-té stood, pale and tense in the house where the chapel of Fray Juan Padilla had been established, — once it had been the house of the governor of the village who might even now be among the victims of the broken trust.

On the altar was a crucifix in gold on ebony, and the eyes of the boy were not kindly as he regarded it.

"They lie when they say you are a god of peace like our god Po-se-yemo," he said. "They lie when they say you are the god of the red man — you are the white god of the white people — and you will let the red men hold not anything that your white children want!"

He heard himsef speak the words aloud there alone where the new alter was — he seemed to hear himself saying it over and over as if by the sound of his own voice he could kill the sound of the tortured red men in the court.

A blanketed figure ran in at the open door, halted at the sound of Tahn-té's voice — and then flung himself forward. It was Ka-yemo and his teeth were chattering at the thought of the inferno without.

" It may be they will not look for us here," he said as he saw who it was in the chapel —" Perhaps — if one keeps near — to their strong god: and you are close also — and —"

" I stay close because it is my work,"— said Tahn-té. " Some of the men tied to the stakes out there bent before their strong god and said prayers there.— Did it save them? "

" They will kill us — we will never see our people — they will kill us! " muttered Ka-yemo shaken with fear.

" I do not think they want to kill us: — they still need us for many things. We are only boys, we have not wives that we refuse to give to the white men — if we had it might be different, who knows? "

" Is that the cause? "

" The white men will give a different one — but that is the cause! The men of this valley think it is enough if they give their houses, and their corn, and their woven blankets to their fine white brothers: — the red men are foolish men,— so they burn at the stake out there! "

Ka-yemo stared at him, and crouched in his blanket.

" You say strange things," he muttered. " I think when they get crazy with the spirit to kill that they will kill us all. I do not stay to be killed — I go! "

Tahn-té staring at the emblems of holiness on the altar scarcely heard him.

" I go, Tahn-té,— I go if I have to swim the river with the ice.— Do you stay here to be killed? "

" I am here to learn many things — I learn but little yet, I cannot go."

" But — if you die? "

" I think it is not yet that I die," said Tahn-té — " There is much to do."

"And — if I live to see — our people?"

"Tell my mother I am strong — and I feel her prayers when the sun comes up. Tell the governor I stay to learn what the white god does for the red men; when I have things to tell the people I will come back to Povi-whah."

But the ice of that winter melted, and the summer bore its fruit, and the second spring time had come to the land before Tahn-té crossed the mesas and stood at his mother's door.

"Thanks — that you have come," she said, and wept, and he held her hand and did not know the things to say, only: —"Thanks that our gods have brought me back."

"And the magic of the white man?"

"It is here," and he opened a bag made of buffalo skin, and in it were books and papers covered with written words. She looked on them with awe. Her son was only a boy but he had won that which was precious, and earned honors from the men of her tribe and her clan.

"Not to me must you tell it first," she said —"The Ruler will hear you, and the governor,— they will decide if it is to be known, or if it is to be secret."

The old men sprinkled prayer meal — and smoked medicine smoke over the books to lift any lingering curses from the white men's god, and then the boy opened the pages and made clear how the marks stood for words, and the words put all together stood for the talk of the white god. It was a thing of wonder to the council.

"And it is a strong god?" asked the Ruler.

"It is strong for war: — not for peace," said the boy.

"Ka-yemo brought back the words of the medicine-

man of the grey blanket who talked of their god. All his talk was of peace and of love in the heart. Is that true?"

"It is true. He was a good man. It may be that some men are born so good that even the gods of the men of iron cannot make them evil. And Padre Luis was born into the world like that."

"We listen to you to hear of the moons and the suns since you went away."

The boy told of the fruitless search to the east for the wonderful land of the slave's romance, where the natives used golden bowls instead of earthen vessels for food, where each soldier was so sure of gaining riches that the weight of provisions carried was small lest the animals be not strong enough to carry all the gold and the food also.

The old men laughed much at this search for the symbol of the Sun Father along the waters of the Mischipi, and commended the wise men of Ci-cu-yé who had the foresight to plan the romance, and to send the slave to lead the adventurers to the land of false dreams.

It was bad, however, that the strangers had not lost themselves in the prairies, or were not killed by the fierce tribes of the north: — it was bad that they came back to the villages of the Pō-sōn-gé river.

Then the boy told of the final despair of the conquerors, and their disheartened retreat to the land of the south. For two years they had terrorized the people of the land — worse enemies than the Navahu or the Comanche or the Apache fighter, then when they had made ruins where towns and gardens had been, they said it was all of no use since the yellow metal was not found in the ground.

"Did the wise men of iron not know that where

the yellow metal is in the earth, that there is ever the symbol of the Sun Father, and that it must be a thing sacred and a hidden place for prayer?"

"They did not know that: — no man told them."

Kā-ye-fah, the ancient Ruler blew smoke from his pipe to the four ways, and spoke.

"Yet among the men they burned to ashes in the village square were many who could have told them that, and three who could have told them where such prayer places were hidden! It is well, my children, that they did die, and not tell that which the Sun Father has hidden for his own people: — it is well!"

"It is well!" echoed the others of the council.

"We all die when the day or the night comes,"— continued the old man. "It is well that we die in bravery for the sake of the others who have to live and walk the earth path. It is well that we have strong hearts to think about. One day I shall go in the ground with my fathers; I am old, and the trail has been long, and in my old days the sunlight has been covered for me."

Tahn-te did not know what he meant, but the other men bent their heads in sympathy.

"It is twice four moons since my child Kā-ye-povi was carried away in the darkness when we fought the Navahu in the hunting grounds to the west,"— he continued. "No one has found her — no trader has brought her back. When a woman, she will not know her own people, or our own speech. I think of that, and grow weak. Our people have never been slaves — yet she will be a slave for our enemy the Navahu! So it is that I grow old more quick, and the time may come soon to sleep on our Mother — the Earth."

"We wish that it comes not soon," said the governor, and the others signified their assent.

"Thanks, thanks that you wish it. I do not speak of it to give sad hearts. I speak because of the days when I may be gone, and another than me will hold the knowledge of a sacred place where the Sun Father hides his symbol. It is good that I hear of the men who let themselves go into ashes, and when if they had said once: — "I know where it is — the metal of the Sun!" all might have gone free and lived long days. My children: — it may be that some day one of you will hold a secret of the sacred place where strong magic lives! If it be so, let that man among you think in his heart of the twenty times ten men who let themselves be burned into ashes by the white men of iron! Guard you the sacred places — and let your ashes go into the sands, or be blown by the winds to the four ways. But from the sacred things of the gods, lift not the cover for the enemy!"

The old man trembled with the intensity of the thought and the dread of what the unborn years might bring.

After a moment of silence the governor spoke:

"It may be that you live the longest of all! No one knows who will guard the things not to be told. But no Te-hua can uncover that which belongs to the Sun Father, and the Earth Mother."

"It is true: — thanks that it is true!"— said the other men, and Tahn-té knew he was listening to things not told to boys.

"Thanks that you speak so," said the Ruler. "Now we have all spoken of this matter. It is done. But the magic of the white hunters of gold, we have not yet heard spoken. How is it, boy, that

you have brought all these signs of it: — what made blind their eyes? "

"Not anything," said Tahn-té. "It was a long time I was with them. Some men had one book, or two, other men had papers that came in great canoes from their land in Spain. Some had writings from their fathers or their friends. These I heard read and talked of around the camp fire. When they went away some things were thrown aside or given to the padres who were to stay and talk of their gods. All I found I hid in the earth. The people of Ci-bo-la killed Padre Juan, and I traded a broken sword for his books and his papers. The sword I also had buried. They were afraid of the books, I had learned to read them, and I was not afraid."

"And you came from Ci-bo-la alone? " asked the governor,—" it is a long trail to carry a load."

"All was not carried from there. I came back to Ci-cu-yé to learn more from Padre Luis who meant to live there. He did not live so long, but while he lived he taught me."

"The men of Ci-cu-yé killed him too? "

"They made him die when they said I must not take beans or meal to him where he lived in a cave, and where he made prayers for their shadow spirits."

"You wanted that he should have food? " asked the Ruler.

"I wanted that he should live to teach me all the books before the end came," said the boy simply. "It is not all to be learned in two winters and one summer."

"That is true," said Kā-ya-fah the Ruler. "All of a man's life is needed to learn certain things of magic. It is time now that you come back and begin

the work of the Orders. You have earned the highest right a boy has yet earned, and no doors will be closed for you on the sacred things given to people."

"We think that is so," said the governor — "no doors will be closed for the son of Sāā-hanh-que-ah, the Woman of the Twilight."

This was the hour he had dreamed of through the months which had seemed horrible as the white man's hell. One needs only to read the several accounts of Coronado's quest for the golden land of the Gran Quivera in 1540–42 to picture what the life of a little native page must have been with the dissatisfied adventurers, by whom all "Indians" were considered as slaves should their service be required.

Men had died beside him on the trail — and there had been times when he felt he too would die but for the thought of this hour when he could come back, and the council could say —"It is well!"

"I thank you, and my mother will thank you," he said with his eyes on the stones of the kiva lest the men see that his eyes were wet. "My mother said prayers with me always, and that helped me to come back."

"The prayers of the Shadow Woman are high medicine," assented one of the men. "She brought back my son to live when the breath was gone away."

"As a little child she had a wisdom not to be taught," affirmed the Ruler —" and now it is her son who brings us the magic of the iron men. Tell us how you left the people of Ci-cu-yé."

"They were having glad dances that the Christians were gone, and that the padres were dead as other men die. So long as they let me I carried food and water to Padre Luis. Then they guarded me in the kiva, and laughed at me, and when they let me go I

knew it was because he was no longer alive. No: — they did not harm me. They were too pleased that I could tell them of where their slave whom they called the "Turk"— led the gold hunters searching for the Quivera of yellow metal and blue stones. They had much delight to hear of the woeful time of the white men. I could stay all my days at Ci-cu-yé and be precious to them, if I would talk of the trouble trail to Quivera, but when I had seen that the Padre was indeed gone to the Lost Others, my work was no more at Ci-cu-yé. I took his books also for my own — and all these things I have brought back at Povi-whah to make good my promise when I went away. Some things in the books, I know, and that I can tell you. Of the rest I will work until I do know, and then I can tell you that."

"That is good," said Kā-ye-fah the Ruler. "You shall be as my son and in the long nights of the winter moons we will listen. The time told of in the prophecies of Ki-pah is coming to us. He said also that in each danger time would be born one to mark the way for the people to follow — in each danger time so long as the Te-hua people were true to the gods!"

Tahn-té breathed on the hand of the old men, and went up from the kiva into the cool night of the early summer.

It was too wonderful a night for aught but to reach up in thought to the height of the warm stars. They came so close he could feel their radiance in his heart.

Twice had his name in council been linked to the prophecies of the wise and mysterious prophet of the ancient days! Always he had known that the Woman of the Twilight and he were not to live the life of the others. He had not known why they

were set apart for unusual experiences, but to-night he dared to think. With the words of the wise men still in his ears — the rulers who could make and unmake — he knew that no other boy had ever heard the praise and promise he had heard. He knew they thought they were giving words to one who would be a leader in the years to come — and this first night under the peace of the stars, he was filled with a triumph and an exaltation for which there were no words.

He would be a leader — not of war — not of government for the daily duties of village life, but of the Things of the Spirit which seemed calling within him to highest endeavor. He knew as yet nothing of Te-hua ceremonies — he had all to learn, yet he felt inspired to invent some expression for the joy which was his.

The new moon seemed to rest on the very edge of the mesa above him: — the uplifted horn looked like a white flame rising from purple shadows.

A white flame! — a *white* flame!

To the Indian mind all signs are symbolic,— and the flame was exactly above the point where the light was set ceremonially and regularly to light the Indian god back to his own people!

A point of white flame above that shrine of centuries!

No eyes but his saw it at exactly that angle — of course it was not meant for other eyes. It was meant that it should be seen by him alone on his first night with the people he meant to work for! With the memory of the prophecies in his ears had he seen it. It could mean only that the god himself set it there as a proof that the devotion of Tahn-té was acceptable — and that he had been born of his mother that the

prophecies might be fulfilled at the right time — and that the light of the moon on his face had meant ——

His thought came so quickly that all the air of the night appeared alive with the unseen — and the unseen murmured in his ears, and his memories — and in his heart!

Suddenly he stretched his open hands high to the stars, and then ran across the level to the foot of the bluff. It was high and very steep, but wings seemed his — his heart was on the summit, and his body must follow — must get there before the white flame sank into the west — must send his greeting to answer the greeting of the god!

In the pouch at his girdle was the fire flint, and a wisp of the silky wild flax of tinder. Two sticks of dead scrub piñon was there; he broke them in equal lengths and laid them in the cross which is the symbol of the four ways, and of the four winds from which the sacred breath is drawn for all that lives — the symbol also of union by which all human life is perpetuated. All fires of sacrifices,— or of magic power, must commemorate these things which are sacred things, and Tahn-té placed them and breathed upon them, and touched them with the spark from the white flint, and then arose in joy and faced the moon yet visible, knowing that the god had seen his answering flame on the shrine — and that it meant a dedication to the Things of the Spirit.

And as he stood there on the mesa's edge, exalted at the wonder of the night, he did not speak, yet he heard the echo of words in his own voice: —"*No one but Tahn-té shall gather the woods for the fire to light Po-se-yemo back; — and when he sees the blaze, and comes back, you will tell him it was his son who kept the fire!*"

Like a flash came the memory of that other time at the edge of that other mesa in Hopi-land! He had said those words to his mother — and had forgotten them. He could never forget them again, for the god had sent them back to him to remember. And Tahn-té trembled at the wondrous signs given him this night, and sprinkled meal to the four ways, and held prayer thoughts of exaltation in his heart.

And this was the last day of the boy years of Tahn-té.

He began then the years of the work for which his Other Self told him he had been born on earth.

CHAPTER VI

TAHN-TÉ — THE RULER

SUMMERS of the Sun, and winters when the stars danced for the snow, had passed over the valley of Povi-whah. New people had been born into the world, and old people had died, but the oldest man in the council, Kā-ye-fah — the Ruler of Things from the Beginning, had lived many years after the time when he thought the shadow life must come to him. And to the Woman of the Twilight he had said that it was her son who kept him living — her son to whom he taught the ancient things of his own youth. In the keen enthusiasms he had found such a son as he had longed for. The lost daughter, Kā-ye-povi, he had never found — and never forgotten. To Tahn-té he had talked of her until she almost lived in their lives. The face of the god-maid on the south mesa had for Kā-ye-fah the outline of chin and backward sweep of hair strangely akin to the face of the lost child. He liked to think the god-maid belonged more to his clan of Towa Toan — the High Mesa clan — than to another.

"If she had not gone into the shadow land, her face would have looked that way," he said.

"And we could gather bright flowers for her hair," — said the boy —"they would be sweeter than the cold, far brightness of the stars where the god-maid waits," and he pointed to where Antares gleamed from the heart of the Scorpion above the dusk profile, —"I think of Kā-ye-povi as the dream maid. She

will be my always young sweetheart — my only one."

"That is good," said Kā-ye-fah —"very good for the work of the unborn years."

For the youth was to carry on the tribal prayers to the gods when Kā-ye-fah no longer walked on earth. And his teaching must be greater than all other teaching, for the Ruler was planning for the work of the days to come.

And in a day of the early spring the work was made ready, for to Sāā-hanh-que-ah he said: —"A week ago So-hoah-tza went under the waters of the river and never breathed again. To him was given the guard of the sacred place of the Sun Father. I have not yet made any other the guardian. You are the woman of the order of the Po-Ahtun — I give you the guard to keep. Call the governor — but call your son first. You shall be guard as So-hoah-tza was guard, but Tahn-té shall be guard as I have been! Lean lower, and let your ear listen and your heart keep sacred the word. I go to our Lost Others — but I leave you to guard."

The governor came, and all were sad, but no one thought that the life was over. Kā-ye-fah talked and smiled as one who goes to a feast.

But Tahn-té, standing tall and still by the couch said: —"It will be over! This morning he wakened and said he would go with the sun to-day. He has no other thought, and he will go!"

And the women wept, and made ready the things of burial for the high priest of the highest order. If Tahn-té said he would go into the shadows at that time — the women knew that it would be so. Tahn-te, as they knew him, joyous in the dances of the seasons,— was never in their minds apart from Tahn-té the prophet whose dreams even as a boy, had

been beyond the dreams of the others who sought visions.

And as the sun touched the black line of the pines on the western mountain, the aged Ruler asked for his wand of office, and the governor gave it to him, and with his own hand he gave it to Tahn-té, that even when his own form was covered with the soil, his vote would be on record in the minds of those who listened — and that vote gave to his pupil in magic, the wand of power — The youngest qualified member of the Order of Spiritual things was thus acclaimed as the Po-Ahtun-ho, a Ruler of Things from the Beginning.

Twenty-four years he had lived — but the time of life with the white men had counted more than double. In magic of many kinds he was more wise than the men of years, and the heart of his mother was glad with the almost perfect gladness when Tahn-té stood in the place of the Ancient Wisdom and listened as the ear of the god listens to the recitation of many tribal prayers.

The Po-Ahtun-ho also listens at times to the individual appeals of the things of every day life — as a father listens to a child who seeks advice. To the more ancient Rulers the younger people were often afraid to go — various " uncles " of the village were appealed to instead. But the youth of Tahn-té made all things different — even the love of a man for a maid, was not so small a thing that the new Ruler made the suppliant feel how little it was.

And one of the first who came to him thus — who knelt and offered a prayer to him, the prayer of a love, was the little Apache tigress who had been first of his own village to greet him in Ua-lano — Yahn Tsyn-deh, who had grown so pretty that the men of

the other villages talked of her, and her mother had asked great gifts for her. But the mother had died with the winter, and Yahn refused to be subject to the Tain-tsain clan of her father, and there had been much trouble until she threatened to go back to her mother's tribe, and many thought it might come to that after all — for she was very strong of will.

But before Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho she crouched, and sobs shook her, and her hair covered her face as a veil.

" If it is of the clan, Yahn, it is to the governor you should speak: —" said Tahn-té —" from him it may come to me if he thinks best. There are rules we must not break. Because I carried you, when little, on my shoulder, is no reason to walk past the door of the governor and bring his duties to me."

He spoke kindly, for his heart was kind towards the little fighter of boyhood's days. Her alien blood was ever prompting her to reckless daring beyond the customs of Te-hua maidens. In a different way, he himself was an alien and it helped him to understand her. But this day he saw another Yahn — one he had not known could hide under the reckless exterior.

She tossed back her hair and faced him.

" How should I speak with Phen-tza the governor — he is the uncle of Ka-yemo! It is he who has helped do this thing — he would make me a slave or have me whipped! How should I speak with him? Ka-yemo knows that the governor his uncle, will —

" Ka-yemo! What has Ka-yemo done? What trouble does he make? "

" Oh — no trouble! " her words were bitter words, —" Only the governor his uncle, has talked with the family of Tsa-fah and the marriage is made with his

daughter Koh-pé of the beads, and you — know, Tahn-té — you know!"

Tahn-té did know, he regarded her in silence.

"Speak!"—she pleaded. "You are more than governor — you are the Highest! Magic is yours to make and to unmake. Unmake this thing! With your magic send him back to me — to me!"

"Magic is not for that: — it is for Those Above!"

Again she flung herself at his feet and wept. The sobs hurt him, yet he must not lift her. She begged for a charm — for a spell — for black magic to strike dead the wearer of the red bears and the blue beads, for all wild things a wild passion could suggest.

"If you could see into the other years you would be content to have it as it is," he said gently —"the years ahead may —"

"I care nothing for the years ahead! I want the *now!* — I want —"

"Listen!" he said, and she fell silent with covered face. "That which you feel for Ka-yemo is not the love of marriage. A man takes a wife for love of a wife and a home and children in the home. A man does not chain himself to a tigress whose bite and whose blows he has felt. A man would wish to be master: — what man has been born who could be master in your home?"

"You do not know. You have lived a different sort of life! I could be more than another wife — than any other wife! I shall kill some one! — and she rose to her feet —"unless the magic comes I kill some one!"

"And then?"

"Then Phen-tza the governor will have me

strangled, and they will take me to my grave with ropes of raw hide and there will not any where be a sad heart for Yahn Tsyn-deh."

"You see how it is — he is precious to you — as he always has been. But your love is too great a love for happy days. Always it will bring you the ache in the heart. No thing of earth should be given the love like that: — it is a fire to burn a whole forest in the days of its summer, and in the winter snows there will be only ashes."

"Good! — then I, Yahn, will rather burn to the ashes in such summer days, and be dead under the snows in the winter of the year!"

"And after that?"

"After that will not the Po-Ahtun-ho be Ruler always? Will he not remember his friends who are precious in the Beyond as he remembers this one to-day?" she asked mockingly. "Kā-ye-fah told the council that you have lived a life no other man lives, and that no woman is precious to you: — when you find the woman who is yet to come, may a viper poison her blood — may a cat of the hills tear her flesh! May you love until madness comes — and may the woman find only death in your arms — and find it quickly!"

When the Woman of the Twilight came in from the field with yellow corn pollen for the sacred ceremonies, the lattice of reeds at the outer door was yet shaking as from touch of a ruthless hand, or a strong wind.

"Who was it that cried here? she asked. "Who has left you sad?"

"Perhaps a prophetess, my mother," answered Tahn-té, and sat thoughtful where Yahn had left

him. And after a long time he arose and sought the governor.

But it was fated that the governor and the new Ruler were not to talk of the love of a maid or the marriage of a man that day.

A runner had been sent to Povi-whah from Kat-yi-ti. He gave his message, and stayed to eat while other runners took the trail, and before the sun had moved the width of a hand across the sky, the villages of Kah-po and Tsa-mah and Oj-ke were starting other runners to Ui-la-ua and far Te-gat-ha and at Kah-po the head men gathered to talk in great council over the word brought from the south.

For the word was that the men of the iron and the beards and the white skins were again coming to the land of the People of the Sun. They came in peace, and searched for the lost padres. A man of the gown was with them for prayers, and a Te-hua man who had been caught by the Navahu long winters ago and traded to the land of green birds. The Te-hua man said the white people were good people, and he was guiding them to the villages by the big river, Pō-sōn-gé.

CHAPTER VII

THE SILKEN SCARF

OF the many godly enterprises set afoot for exploration and conquest in New Spain of the sixteenth century, not all have chronicles important enough for the historian to make much of. But there were goings and comings of which no written record reached the archives. Things forbidden did happen even under the iron heel of Castilian rule, and one of the hidden enterprises grew to be a part of the life of the Pō-sōn-gé valley for a time.

Not that it was unchronicled, but there was a good reason why the records were not published for the Spanish court.

It was a pretty romantic reason also — and the usual one, if we may trust the world's judgment of the foundation of all trouble. But a maid tossing a blossom from a Mexic balcony could not know that the stranger from Seville to whom it was thrown was the son of an Eminence, instead of the simple gentlemen named Don Ruy Sandoval in a royal letter to the Viceroy. With him travelled his tutor whose tutelage was past, and the position a difficult one for even the Viceroy to comprehend.

Since the youth rebelled at the habit of a monk — he had been given a space for adventure under godly surveillance. The godly surveillance limped a trifle at times. And because of this did Don Ruy walk again in the moonlight under the balcony and this

time more than a blossom came to him — about the stem of a scarlet lily was a flutter of white! The warm light of the Mexic moon helped him to decipher it — a page from Ariosto — the romance of Doña Bradamante — and the mark of a pen under words uttered by the warrior-maid herself — words to warm a cooler youth than this one from over seas: —*"Why seek I one who flies from me? — Why implore one who deigns not to send me reply?"*

Whereupon there was no further delay as to reply — there was found an open gate to a garden where only stars gave light, where little hands were held for a moment in his — soft whispers had answered his own — and he was held in thrall by a lace wrapped senorita whose face he had not even looked on in the light. All of Castile could give one no better start in a week than he had found for himself in three days in the new world of promise

For there were promises — and they were sweet. They had to do with a tryst two nights away — then the lady, whom he called "Doña Bradamante" because of the page torn from that romance, would enlighten him as to her pressing need of the aid of a gentleman, and courage would be hers to tell him why a marked line and a scarlet lily had been let fall in his path — and why she had trusted his face at first sight — though he had not yet seen her own — and why —

It was the usual thing — the page of a poem and a silken scarf as a guerdon of her trust.

He found the place of the tryst with ease for a stranger in the Mexic streets, but a glimmer of white robe was all he saw of his unknown "Doña Bradamante." Others were at the tryst, and their staves and arms lacked no strength. He heard a woman

scream, then he heard her try again to scream and fail because of a hand on her throat, and beyond that he knew little for a night or two, and there was not much of day between.

Monkly robes were the next thing in his range of vision — one face in particular, sallow and still with eyes glancing sideways, seeing all things; — divining much! soft steps, and bandages, and out of silence the excited shrillness of Don Diego Maria Francisco Brancadori the tutor: — the shepherd who had lost track of his one rather ruffled lamb.

Pious ejaculation — thanks to all the saints he could think of — horror that the son of an Eminence should be thus abused — prophecies of the wrath to come when the duchess, his mother — At this Don Ruy groped for a sword, and found a boot, and flung it, with an unsanctified word or two, in the direction of the lamentation.

"You wail worse than a dog of a Lutheran under the yoke," he said in as good a voice as he could muster with a cut in his lip. "What matter how much Eminence it took to make a father for me — or how many duchesses to make a mother? I am labelled as plain Ruy Sandoval and shipped till called for. If you are to instruct my youth in the path it should tread — why not start in with a lesson on discretion?"

At this hopeful sign of life from the bundle of bandages on the monk's bed, Maestro Diego approached and looked over his illustratious charge with a careful eye.

"Discretion has limped far behind — enterprise, else your highness would cut a different figure by now — and —

"Choke back your infernal highnesses!" growled

To Don Ruy, a Message in the Moonlight

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the younger man. "I know well what your task is to be here in this new land: — it is to send back reports of duty each time I break a rule or get a broken head. Now by the Blood, and the Cross, if you smother not your titles, and let me range free, I tell you the thing I will do: — I will send back a complaint against you to Seville — and to make sure that it goes, no hand shall carry it but your own. Ere they can find another nurse maid for my morals, I'll build me a ship and go sailing the South seas for adventure — and your court tricksters will have a weary time in the chase! I like you better than many another godly spy who might have been sent, and I promise myself much joy in the journal of strange travels it is in your mind to write. But once for all, remember, we never were born into the world until a week ago!"

"But your Excellency —

"By the Great Duke of Hell! Will you not bridle your tongue when the damned monks are three deep at the key hole?"

By which it will be seen that the travels of the pious Don Diego were not all on paths of roses.

A little later the still faced priest of the stealthy glances came in, and Don Ruy sat on the side of the bed, and looked him over.

"You are the one who picked me up — eh? And the gentlemen of the streets had tossed me into a corner after discreetly starting my soul on its travels! Warm trysts your dames give to a stranger in this land — when you next confess the darlings, whisper in their ears to be less bloodthirsty towards youth and innocence!"

The man in the robe smiled.

"That unwise maid will make no more trysts," he

said quietly,—" not if she be one important enough to cause an assault on your Highness."

" Did they —? "

" No — no — harm would not be done to her, but her destiny is without doubt a convent. The men who spoiled your tryst earn no purses as guard for girls of the street,— sacred walls will save them that trouble for a time — whether maid or wife I dare promise you that! It is as well you know. Time is wasted seeking adventure placed beyond mortal reach."

" Convent — eh? Do your holy retreats teach the little tricks the lady knew? And do they furnish their vestals with poems of romance and silks and spices of Kathay? "

He drew from an inner pocket a little scarf of apple green with knotted fringes, and butterflies, various colored in dainty broidery. As the folds fell apart an oder of sweetness stole into the shadowy room of the monastery, and the priest was surprised into an ejaculation at sight of such costly evidence, but he smothered it hastily in a muttered prayer.

After that he listened to few of the stranger's gibes and quips, but with a book of prayers on his knee he looked the youth over carefully, recalled the outburst of Don Diego as to origin, and the adventurer's own threat to build a ship and sail where chance pointed. Plainly, this seeker of trysts, or any other thing promising adventure, had more of resource than one might expect from a battered stranger lifted out of the gutter for the last rites.

The priest — who looked a good soldier and who was called Padre Vicente " de los Chichimecos " (of the wild tribes) read further in his book of hours, and then spoke the thing in his mind.

"For a matter of many years in this land of the Indies I have waited for a man of discreet determination for a certain work. The virgin herself led me to the gutter where you groaned in the dark, and I here vow to build her a chapel if this thought of mine bears fruit."

"Hump! My thanks to our Lady,— and I myself will see to the building of the chapel. But tell me of the tree you would plant, and we'll then have a guess at the fruit. It may prove sour to the taste! Monkly messes appealed to me little on the other side of the seas. I've yet to test their flavor on this shore of adventure."

Padre Vicente ignored the none too respectful comment — and took from his pocket a bit of virgin gold strung on a thread of deer sinew.

"Your name is Don Ruy Sandoval," he said. "You are in this land for adventure. You content yourself with the latticed window and the strife of the streets — why not look for the greater things? You have wealth and power at your call — why not search for an empire of — this?"

Then he showed the virgin gold worn smooth by much wearing.

Don Ruy blinked under the bandage and swore by Bradamante of the adventure that he would search for it gladly if but the way was shown.

"Where do we find this golden mistress of yours?" he demanded, "and why have you waited long for a comrade?"

"The gold is in the north where none dare openly seek treasure, or even souls, since Coronado came back broken and disgraced. I have waited for the man of wealth who dared risk it, and — at whose going the Viceroy could wink."

"Why wink at me — rather than another?"

"That is a secret knotted in the fringes of the silken scarf there —" said Padre Vicente with a grim smile. "Cannot a way be found to clear either a convent or a palace of a trouble breeder, when the church itself lends a hand? You were plainly a breeder of trouble, else had you escaped the present need of bandages. For the first time I see a way where Church and the government of the Indies can go with clasped hands to this work. In gold and converts the work may prove mighty. How mighty depends whether you come to the Indies to kill time until the day you are recalled — or improve that time by success where Coronada failed."

"And if we echo his failure?"

"None will be the wiser even then! You plan for a season of hunting in the hills. I plan for a mission visit by the Sea of Cortez. Mine will be the task to see how and where our helpers join each other and all the provisioning of man and beast. Mine also to make it clear to the Viceroy that you repent your—

"Hollo!"— Don Ruy interrupted with a grimace. "You are about to say I repent of folly — or the enticing of a virgin — or that I fell victim to the blandishments of some tricky dame — I know all that cant by rote! — a man always repents until his broken head is mended, but all that is apart from the real thing — which is this: — In what way does my moment with a lady in the dark affect the Viceroy of the Indies? Why should his Excellency trouble himself that Ruy Sandoval has a broken head — and a silken scarf?"

Padre Vicente stared — then smiled. Ruy Sandoval had not his wits smothered by the cotton wool of exalted pamperings.

"I will be frank with you," he said at last. "The Viceroy I have not yet addressed on this matter. But such silken scarfs are few — that one would not be a heavy task to trace to its owner."

"Ah! — I suspected your eminence had been a gallant in your time," remarked Don Ruy, amicably —"It is not easy to get out of the habit of noticing alluring things: — that is why I refused to do penance for my birth by turning monk, and shrouding myself in the gown! Now come — tell me! You seem a good fellow — tell me of the "Doña Bradamante" of the silks and the spices."

"The destiny of that person is probably already decided," stated the priest of the wild tribes, "she is, if I mistake not, too close to the charge of the Viceroy himself for that destiny to be questioned. The mother, it is said, died insane, and the time has come when the daughter also is watched with all care lest she harm herself — or her attendants. So I hear — the maid I do not know, but the scarf I can trace. Briefly — the evident place for such a wanton spitfire is the convent. You can easily see the turmoil a woman like that can make as each ship brings adventurers — and she seeks a lover out of every group."

"Jesus! — and hell to come! Then I was only one of a sort — all is fish to the net of the love lorn lady! Maestro Diego would have had the romance and the lily if he had walked ahead instead of behind me! — and he could have had the broken head as well!" The he sniffed again at the bit of silk, and regarded the monk quizzically.

"You have a good story, and you tell it well, holy father," he said at ast,—"and I am troubled in my mind to know how little of it may be truth, and how

much a godly lie. But the gold at last is true gold, and whatever the trick of the lady may be, you say it will serve to win for me the privilege to seek the mines without blare of trumpets. Hum! — it is a great favor for an unknown adventurer."

"Unknown you may be to the people of the streets, and to your ship mates," agreed the Padre. "But be sure the Viceroy has more than a hint that you are not of the rabble. The broils you may draw to yourself may serve to disquiet him much — yet he would scarce send you to the stocks, or the service of the roads. Be sure he would rather than all else bid you god speed on a hunting journey."

"But that you are so given to frankness I should look also for a knife in the back to be included in his excellency's favors," commented Don Ruy. "Name of the Devil! — what have I done since I entered the town, but hold hands with one woman in the dark —and be made look as if I had been laid across a butcher block on a busy day! Hell take such a city to itself! I've no fancy for halting over long in a pit where a gentleman's amusements are so little understood. If the Doña of the scarf were aught but an amiable maniac the thing would be different. I would stay — and I would find her and together we would weave a new romance for a new world poet! But as it is, gather your cut throats and name the day, and we'll go scouring the land for heathen souls and yellow clinkers."

Padre Vicente de Bernaldez was known by his wonderful mission-work to be an ecclesiastic of most adventurous disposition. Into wild lands and beyond the Sea of Cortez had he gone alone to the wild tribes — so far had he gone that silence closed over his trail

like a grave at times — but out of the Unknown had he come in safety!

His fame had reached beyond his order — and Ruy Sandoval knew that it was no common man who spoke to him of the Indian gold.

"Francisco de Coronado," stated this padre of the wilderness, "came back empty handed from the north land of the civilized Indians for the reason that he knew not where to search. The gold is there. This is witness. It came to me from a man who — is dead! It was given him by a woman of a certain tribe of sun worshippers. To her it was merely some symbol of their pagan faith — some priestly circle dedicated to the sun."

"It sounds well," agreed Don Ruy —"but the trail? Who makes the way? And what force is needed?"

For a guide the Padre Vicente had a slave of that land, a man of Te-hua baptized José, for five years the padre had studied the words and the plans. The man would gladly go to his own land,— he and his wife. All that was required was a general with wealth for the conquest. There were pagan souls to be saved, and there was wealth for the more worldly minds. The padre asked only a tenth for godly reasons.

Thus between church and state was the expedition of his Excellency Don Ruy Sandoval ignored except as a hunting journey to the North coast of the Cortez Sea — if he ranged farther afield, his own be the peril, for no troops of state were sent as companions. The good father had selected the men — most of them he had confessed at odd times and knew their metal. All engaged as under special duty to the

cross: — it was to be akin to a holy pilgrimage, and absolution for strange things was granted to the men who would bear arms and hold the quest as secret.

Most of them thought the patron was to be Mother Church, and regarded it as a certain entrance to Paradise. Don Ruy himself meekly accepted a role of the least significance: — a mere seeker of pleasure adventures in the provinces! It would not be well that word of risk or danger be sent across seas —and the Viceroy could of course only say "god speed you" to a gentleman going for a ride with his servants and his major domo.

And thus: — between a hair brained adventurer and a most extolled priest, began the third attempt to reach the people called by New Spain, the Pueblos: — the strangely learned barbarians who dwelt in walled towns — cultivating field by irrigation, and worshipping their gods of the sun, or the moon, or the stars through rituals strange as those of Pagan Egypt.

Word had reached Mexico of the martyrdom of Fray Juan Padilla at Ci-bo-la, but in the far valley of the Rio Grande del Norte — called by the tribes the river Pō-sōn-gé,— Fray Luis de Escalona might be yet alive carrying on the work of salvation of souls.

The young Spanish adventurer listened with special interest as the devotion and sacrifices of Fray Luis were extolled in the recitals.

"If he lives we will find that man," he determined. "He was nobly born, and of the province of my mother. I've heard the romance for which he cloaked himself in the gray robe. He should be a prince of the church instead of a wandering lay brother — we will have a human thing to search for in the world beyond the desert — ours will be a crusade to rescue him from the infidel lands."

CHAPTER VIII

THE STORY BY THE DESERT WELL

DON DIEGO marvelled much at the briskness of the plans for a season of hunting ere his troublesome charge was well able to see out of both eyes. But on being told that the range might be wide, he laid in a goodly stock of quills and parchment, for every league of the land would bring new things to his knowledge.

These records were to be entitled "Relaciones of the New and Wondrous Land of the Indian's Island" and in those Relaciones the accounts of Padre Vicente were to loom large. Among the pagan people his war against the false gods had been ruthless. Maestro Diego was destined to hear more of the padres method than he dared hope in the earlier days.

José, the Indian of the North whose Te-hua name was Khen-zah, went with them — also his wife — the only woman, for without her the man would not go in willingness. Two only were the members added by Don Ruy to the cavalcade — one a stalwart fellow of many scars named Juan Gonzalvo who had known service with Pizarro in the land of gold — had lost all his coin in an unlucky game, and challenged the young stranger from Seville for the loan of a stake to gamble with and win back his losses. He looked good for three men in a fight. Instead of helping him in a game, Don Ruy invited him on the hunting trip!

The other addition was as different as might be

from the toughened, gambling conquistador — a mere lad, who brought a letter from the hand of the Viceroy as a testimonial that the lad was a good scribe if it so happened that his sanctity the padre — or his Excellency Don Ruy, should need such an addition in the new lands where their hunting camps were to be. The boy was poor but for the learning given him by the priests,— his knowledge was of little save the knowledge of books. But his willingness to learn was great, and he would prove of use as a clerk or page as might be.

Padre Vicente was not present, and the cavalcade was already two days on the trail, but Don Ruy read the letter, and looked the lad over.

"Your name is —"

"Manuel Lenares — and called 'Chico' because I am not yet so tall as I may be."

"It should be Manuella because you look not yet so manlike as you may be," declared Ruy Sandoval, — and laughed as the angry color swept the face of the lad. "By our Lady, I've known many a dame of high degree would trade several of her virtues for such eyes and lips! Tush — boy! Have no shame to possess them since they will wear out in their own time! I can think of no service you could be to me — yet — I have another gentleman of the court with me holding a like office — Name of the Devil: — it would be a fine jest to bestow upon him a helper for the ponderous 'Relaciones'!" and Don Ruy chuckled at the thought, while the lad stood in sulky embarrassment — willing to work, but not to be laughed at.

He was dressed as might be in the discarded garments of magnificence, well worn and visibly made over to fit his young figure. His cloak of old scarlet,

too large for him, covered a patched shirt and jacket, and reached to his sandel straps of russet leather: — scarce the garb of a page of the Viceregal court, yet above that of the native servant.

"You are — Spanish?"

Again the face of the youth flushed, and he shrugged his shoulders and replaced his velvet cap with its pert cock's feather.

"I have more than enough Spanish blood to send me to the Christian rack or stake if they caught me worshipping the pagan gods of my grandmother," he stated briefly, and plainly had so little hope of winning service that he was about to make his bow and depart in search of the Padre.

But the retort caught Don Ruy, and he held the lad by the shoulder and laughed.

"Of all good things the saints could send, you are the best," he decided —"and by that swagger I'll be safe to swear your grandsire was of the conquistadores — I thought so! Well Chico: — you are engaged for the service of secretary to Maestro Diego Maria Francisco Brancadori. You work is seven days in the week except when your protector marks a saint's day in red ink. On that day you will have only prayers to record, on the other days you will assist at many duties concerning a wonderous account of the adventures Don Diego hopes for in the heathen land."

"Hopes for: — your Excellency?"

"Hopes for so ardently that our comfort may rest in seeing that he meets with little of disappointment on the trail."

For one instant the big black eyes of the lad flashed a shy appreciation of Don Ruy's sober words and merry smile.

"For it is plain to be seen," continued that gentle-

man —" that if Don Diego finds nothing to make record of, your own wage will be a sad trial and expense."

" I understand, your Excellency."

" You will receive the perquisites of a secretary if you have indeed understanding," continued Don Ruy, " but if there are no records to chronicle you will get but the pay of a page and no gifts to look for. Does it please you? "

" It is more than a poor lad who owns not even a bedding blanket could have hoped for, señor, and I shall earn the wage of a secretary. That of a page I could earn without leaving the streets and comfort."

" Oho! " And again the eyes of Don Ruy wandered over the ill garbed figure and tried to fit it to the bit of swagger and confidence.— " I guessed at your grandfather — now I'll have a turn at you: — Is it a runaway whom I am venturing to enroll in this respectable company of sober citizens? "

" Your Excellency! " the lad hung his head yet watched the excellency out of the corner of his eye, and took heart at the smile he saw —" it is indeed true there are some people I did not call upon to say farewell ere offering my services to you, but it is plain to see I carried away not any one's wealth in goods and chattals."

" That is easily to be perceived," said Don Ruy and this time he did not laugh, for with all his light heart he was too true a gentleman to make sport of poverty such as may come to the best of men. " By our Lady, I've a feeling of kinship for you in that you are a runaway indeed — this note mentions the teaching of the priests — I'll warrant they meant to make a monk of you."

" If such hopes are with them, they must wait until

I am born again," decided the lad, and again Don Ruy laughed: — the lad was plainly no putty for the moulding, and there was chance of sport ahead with such a helper to Maestro Diego.

"It will be my charge to see that you are not over much troubled with questions," said his employer, and handed back the letter of commendation. "None need know when you were engaged for this very important work. José over there speaks Spanish as does Ysobel his wife. Tell them you are to have a bed of good quality if it be in the camp — and to take a blanket of my own outfit if other provisions fall short."

A muttered word of thanks was the only reply, and Don Ruy surmised that the boy was made dumb by kindness when he had braced himself for quips and cuffs — knowing as he must — that he was light of build for the road of rough adventure.

"Ho! — Lad of mine!" he called when the youth had gone a few paces —"I trust you understand that you travel with a company of selected virtues? — and that you are a lucky dog to be attached to the most pious and godly tutor ever found for a boy in Spain."

"It is to be called neighbor of these same virtues that I have come begging a bed on the sand when I might have slept at home on a quilt of feathers:"— the lad's tongue had found its use again when there was chance for jest.

"And —"

"Yes: — your Excellency?"

"As to that pagan grandmother of whom you made mention: — her relationship need not be widely tooted through a horn on the journey — yet of all things vital to the honorable Maestro Diego and his "Relaciones," I stand surety that not any one thing will

be given so much good room on paper as the things he learns of the heathen worship of the false gods."

"A nod is as good as a wink to a mule that is blind!" called back the lad in high glee. "Happy am I to have your excellency's permission to hold discourse with him concerning the church accursed lore of our ancestral idols!"

Then he joined José and Ysobel as instructed, and gave the message as to bed and quarters. José said no word in reply, but proceeded to secure blankets, one from the camp of Don Ruy. Ysobel — a Mexican Indian — who had been made Christian by the padre ere she could be included in the company, was building a fire for the evening meal. Seeing that it burned indifferently the new page thrust under the twigs the fine sheet of paper containing the signature of the Viceroy.

Ysobel made an exclamation of protest — but it was to late — it had started the blaze in brave order.

"Your letter — if you should need it — perhaps for the padre!" she said.

"Rest you easy, Nurse," said the lad and stretched himself to watch the supper cooked. "I have no further needs in life but supper and a bed,— see to it that José makes it near you own! I am in the employ of Don Ruy Sandoval for a period indefinite. And he has promised — laugh not out loud Ysobel! — that he will see to it I am not questioned as to whence or why I came to seek service under his banner! — even the holy father is set aside by that promise — I tell you that laughter is not to be allowed! If you let him see that you laugh, I will beat you when we are alone, Ysobel — I will though you have found a dozen husbands to guard you!"

Don Ruy did see the laughter of the woman, and

was well pleased that the lad could win smiles from all classes,— such a one would lighten weary journeys.

He felt that he had done well by Maestro Diego. Plainly the quick wit of the lad betokened good blood, let him prate ever so surely on his heathen grandmother!

Don Diego felt much flattered at the consideration shown by Don Ruy for the "Relaciones"— in fact he had so pleased an interest in the really clever young pen-man that the Padre took little heed of the boy — he was of as much account as a pet puppy in the expedition — but if the would-be historian needed a secretary — or fancied he did,— the lad would be less trouble than an older man if circumstances should arise to make trouble of any sort.

So it chanced that Juan Gonzalvo and Manuel Lenares, called Chico, were the only two included in the company who had not been confessed and enrolled by Padre Vicente himself.

It was the magic time of the year, when new leaves open to the sun, and the moon, even in the bare desert stretches of the land, brought dreams of Castile to more than one of the adventurers.

"Good Father," said Don Ruy with feigned complaint, "Think you not that your rigid rules for the journey might have stopped short of hopeless celibacy for all of us? — Why a moon like that and Venus ascendent unless to make love by?"

"The brightness of that same moon saved you nothing of a cracked pate the hour of fortune when we first met," observed Padre Vicente drily.— "Maids or matrons on the journey would have caused broken heads in the desert as handily as in the city streets."

"By the faith — your words are of wisdom and

much to be valued by his highness," agreed Don Diego. "Make note of that thought for the Relaciones Chico, my son. This pious quest may be a discipline of most high import to all of us. Wifeless should we ride as rode the crusaders of an older day."

"Tum-a-tum-tum!" Don Ruy trolled a fragment of love melody, and laughed:—"I have no fancy for your penances. Must we all go without sweethearts because you two have elected to be bachelors for the saving of souls? Think you the Indian maids will clamor for such salvation? I lay you a wager, good father, that I win as many converts with love songs and a strip of moonlight, as do you both with bell and book!"

Around the camp fires of the nights strangs tales were told — and strange traits of character unconsciously given to the light, and to all the far seeing Padre gave note; — in emergencies it is ever well to know one's resources.

José the Te-hua slave — caught first by the Navahu — traded to the Apaches — thence to neighbors of the south — after years of exile, was the one who had but few words. All the queries of the adventurers as to gold in the north gained little from him — only he remembered that fine yellow grains were in some streams, and it was said that other yellow metal was in secret places, but he did not profess to be a knower of High Things — and it was half a life time since his eyes had rested on his own people.

He was a silent man whose words were in the main for his Ysobel and the boy secretary. But the gold nugget worn smooth in the pocket of Padre Vicente was as a charm to find its parent stock in all good time! Men were with them who knew minerals in

other lands! — It would go hard but that it should be found!

He willingly let the nugget pass from hand to hand: — it was restful as sleep to make the trail seem short. To Don Ruy he had told somewhat of its finding, and the story in full was promised some day to the cavalcade.

And at Ah-ko where they rested — they had not halted at hostile Ci-bo-la! — At Ah-ko where the great pool on the high mesa made glad their eyes, and the chiefs came to pay ceremonial visits, and the men felt they were nearing the end; — there, at the urging of Don Ruy who deemed it worthy of the "Relaciones" — there was told the story of the bit of gold, the Symbol of the Sun, as it had been told to Padre Vicente years before.

"Yes — I did mean to tell you of the finding of it," he announced amiably. "I have listened to all your discources and romances on the journey — and good ones there were among them! But mine would not have been good to tell when seeking recruits, it might have lessened their ardor — for a reason you will shortly preceive!"

"I plainly preceive already that the good father has saved us thus far from a fright!" decided Don Ruy.

"Since a man lived through it you can perhaps endure the telling of it — even here in the half darkness," said the priest, and noted that Don Diego was sharpening a pen, and Chico taking an ink horn from his pocket. The journal of the good gentleman had grown to be one of the joyful things of the journey, and the more gay adventurers gave him some wondrous tales to include.

"It is not a pretty tale, but it may teach you somewhat of these brown people of the stone houses — and some of the meaning back of their soft smiles! It is not a new tale of to-day: — it goes back to the time when the vessels of Narvaez went to the bottom and a few men found their way westward to Mexico."

"De Vaca and his men?" said Don Diego. But the priest shook his head.

"Earlier than that."

"Earlier? Holy Father: — how could that be when no others —"

"Pardon me: — you are about to say no others escaped, are you not? Have you forgotten De Vaca's own statement as to two other men who went ashore before the sinking of the vessels, and who were never heard of again?"

"I have heard of it with great special interest," announced Don Ruy —"heard it in the monastery on the island of Rhodes where the white man you speak of (for one of the lost ones was a negro) had as a boy been trained in godly ways by the Knights of St. John. There the good fathers also educated me as might be and tried with all zeal to make a monk of me! Ever before my mind was held the evil end of the other youth who fled from the consecrated robe, — for he had made a scandal for a pretty nun ere he became a free lance and joined hands with Solyman the Magnificent against Christendom,— oh — many and long were the discourses I had to listen to of that heretic adventurer! He was a Greek of a devout and exalted Christian family, and his name was Don Teodore."

Juan Gonzalvo — called Capitan Gonzalvo in favor of his wide experience and wise management of

camp, had been resting idly on the sands, but sat up, alert at that name.

"Holy name of God: —" and his words were low and keen as though bitten off between his teeth — "is he then alive? Good Father — was it he? and is he still alive?"

While one might count ten, Padre Vicente looked in silence at the tense, eager face of his questioner, and the others stared also, and felt that a spark had touched powder there.

"Yes: — it is true. It was that man," said the priest at last. "But why do you, my son, wake up at the name? May it be that the Greek was dear to you?"

"He should be dear should I find him, or any of his blood!" But the voice of the careless adventurer was changed and was not nice to hear. "All the gold the new land could give me would I barter but to look on the face of Don Teo, the renegade Greek!"

"But not in friendship?"

Juan Gonzalvo laughed, and Don Diego crossed himself at that laugh,— it had the mockery of hell in it, and the priest turned and gave the heretofore careless fellow a keener attention than had previously occurred to him. By so little a thing as a laugh had the adventurer lifted himself from the level where he had been idly assigned.

"You will not look on his face in this world, my son," said the priest, "and enmities should cease at the grave. The man is dead. You could have been but a child when he left Spain, what evil could have given him your hate?"

"My father was one of the Christian slaves chained

by him to the oars of Solyman the infidel Turk! Long days and horrible nights was he witness to the lives of Solyman the mignificent, and Don Teodore the fortunate. When the end came,— when the magnificent patron began to set spies on his favorite lady of the harem, the tricky Greek escaped one dark night, and brought up in Barcelona as an escaped slave of the Turk, pretending he had eluded the swords of the oppressor after dreadful days of bondage."

"I remember that time," said Don Diego. "He was entertained by the nobles, and plied with questions, and was offered a good office in the next crusade against the unsanctified infidels."

"So it was told to me," said Juan Gonzalvo — "told by a man whose every scar spoke of the Greek wolf! I was told of them as other children are told the stories of the blessed saints. My first toy sword was dedicated to the cutting down of that thrice accursed infidel and all his blood. God: — God: — how mad I was when I was told the savages of the new world had done me wrong by sending him to hell before I could even spell his name for curses!"

"My son! You are doing murder in your heart!" and Padre Vicente held up the crucifix with trembling hand.

"That I am!" agreed Gonzalvo and laughed, and laid himself down again to rest on his saddle.— "Does it call for penance to kill a venemous thing?"

"A human soul!" admonished the priest.

"Then he came by such soul later in life than his record shows trace of!" declared Juan Gonzalvo, and this time the priest was silent.

"In truth, report does stand by our friend in that," agreed Don Diego. "He lived as a Turk among the Turkish pirates, and was never so much a Chris-

tian as are those who serve as devils, in the flames of the pit. To slay the infidel is not to slay a soul, good father,— or — if you are of that mind," he added with an attempt at lightness which sat ill on him — so stiff it was as he eyed the still priest warily,—" if you are of that mind, we can never grow dull for argument in the desert marches. In the Holy Office godly men of the Faith work daily and nightly on that question even now in Christian Spain."

The priest shuddered, and fingered his beads. Well they knew in those days the " question " and " Holy office " in Christian Spain. The rack loomed large enough to cast its shadow even to the new found shores at the other side of the world!

And plainly he read also that two otherwise genial gentlemen of the cavalcade were equipped well for all fanatic labor where Holy Cross or personal hates were to be defended. It is well to know one's comrades, and the subject of the Greek had opened doors of strange revelation to him.

" The mind which is of God and of the Holy Mother Church is the mind for the judgments of souls," said Padre Vicente after a silence. " We may thank the saints that we are not called on to condemn utterly any of God's children."

" But what of the Devil's? " asked Don Diego plainly not satisfied with the evasive reply where he had least expected it. " What of the children of the darkness and the Evil One? "

Padre Vicente, of the wild tribes, looked around the group and smiled. Scarce a man of them without at least one lost life to his record — and more than one with murders enough on his list to have won him sainthood if all had been done for the Faith: — which they were not! Back of them crouched dusky

Indians of the village, watching with eager yet apparently kindly interest, this after supper talk of the strange white men of the iron and the beasts, who had come again to their land. The priest made a cigarro — then another one, lit both and passed the first made to the oldest chief — the Ruler of the Indian group. The Indian accepted it with a breath of prayer on the hand of the reverend father, and the latter sent out smoke in a white cloud ere speaking.

"Every brown skin here is a worshipper of false gods, and is therefore a son of Beelzebub — yet to slaughter them for that won no favors for the last Capitan-General who led an army across this land," he remarked, "and mine must not be the task to judge of their infidelity to the Saints or to Christ the Son who has not yet spoken to them!" The words were uttered with an air of finality. Plainly he did not mean to encourage blood lust unless necessary to the work in hand. Don Diego sulkily made the sign of the cross at the Name, and Don Ruy noted that the good father was good on the parry — and if he could use a blade as he did words, he would be a rare fencer for sport. One could clang steel all day and no one be the bearer of a scratch!

"Since the illustrious and much sought for Greek is without doubt serving his master as a flame in hell, it would add sweetness to a fair night if you would tell us how he fared at the hands of his brown brothers," suggested Don Ruy —"and how the Devil found his own at last. These others will be much entertained to hear what share he had in the finding of the gold. Strange it is that I never thought to ask the name of the man — or you to tell it!"

The priest hesitated ever so slightly. Was he of

two minds how much to tell these over eager adventurers? Especially that one of the curses! But the truth, as he had told Don Ruy in part, was an easier thing to maintain, and keep memory of, than a fiction dressed up for the new man. And the man was watching him with compelling eyes, and the boy Chico, with eyes agog, was also alert for his endless notes.

"Yes, he had to do with the gold — much!" he said at last. "He was the only white man who had been told the secret of it."

"Ah-la-la!" murmured Don Ruy, plainly suggesting that such evidence would be the better for a trusty witness.— Padre Vicente heard him, and puffed his cigarro, and half closed his eyes in his strange patient, pale smile.

"But it is true for all that!" he insisted. "And of all places we have crossed since Culiacan was left behind us, none seems more fitting than this for the telling of his story."

His eyes glanced over the men circled above the great pool. The stars were making little points of light in the rock bound water. Far below in the desert a coyote called to his intimates. Indians loitered at the edge of the circle. And at the rim of of the mesa, and high places of the natural fortress, armed sentinels paced; — dusk figures against the far sky. It was truly a place made for tales of adventure.

"Whatever evil your much hated Greek was guilty of, there is one question to ask: — in monk's cell, or in the battles for the wrong — left he the record of a coward?

"No," acknowledged Don Diego —"but his zeal was damnable in all things."

"I ask because various things which he endured could scarcely be understood if you put him in the list of the weak or the incapable."

"Often the strength of the Evil One is a stupendous force for his chosen people," agreed Don Diego. "That is widely known in Europe to-day when Paracelsus with infernal magic of the mind makes cures which belong by every right to the saints alone!"

"And the people are truly cured of their ills — truly healed?"

"Their bodies are truly healed for the life that is temporal, but each soul is doomed for the life that is eternal. No Christian doubts that the mental magic of the physician is donated by Beelzebub whose tool he is."

"He was a student of exceeding depth,"— agreed Padre Vicente —"and it may be he has found magic forbidden to man. But the Greek laid claim to no such power as that, however much it is said that the devil loved him! He had only a strong body, and the dislike to see it cut to pieces for a heathen holiday."

"De Soto, it is said, found a dirk of his when he crossed the land of Apalache years later, seeking empire. But the tribes could or would tell nothing of the lost Greek and the negro slave. The latter was killed by the people called Natchez, and the Greek, who had been among many things: — a sailor, escaped by the water, leaving no trail — not even the trail made by a white skin in a land of dusk people.

"From the Turks he had learned a trick of using stain of barks and herbs. His hair was of brown, but the eyebrows and lashes were heavy and dark. After using such concoction, a mirror of clear water

showed him no trace of himself except the eyes — they were blue beyond hope, but the heavy lashes were a help and a shadow.

"With stolen arms of bow, hatchet, and a flint knife, the man went north — wading the river edge at night, and hiding by day until the land of the Natchez was left behind. A strong river came from the west — and an old canoe gave him hope of finding New Spain by the water course. That journey was a tedious thing of night prowlings, hidings, and, sometimes starvings. Then the end of solitude came, and he was captured by heathen rangers.

They were a large company and were travelling west. Later he learned they were a war company and in a fight his master and most of the others were killed. At the rejoicing of the victors, he sang louder, and danced more wildly than all the others, so they did not kill him. He was traded to other Indians further west for a painted robe and some clay pots. This last move brought him to the villages of the stream, named later by Coronado the Rio Grande, but called by the Indians another name, the Pō-sōn-gé."

"The very villages where we are to go?" demanded Don Ruy.

"Possibly some of the same," said the priest. "How many of you remember the great comet of 1528?"

Several did, and all remembered the dread and horror it spread in Western Europe.

"Think you then what that same threat in the sky must have been to these wild people who seek magic ever from the stars and even the clouds. It was a threat and it called for some sacrifice propitiating the angry gods."

"Sacrifice? Do these infidels then practise such abominations?" asked Don Diego.

"To look at the mild eyes and hear their soft voices of these our guests it is not easy to think it," agreed Padre Vicente, "but these people are but the northern cousins of the men Cortez conquered — their customs differ only in degree. To both Venus and Mars were human god-offerings made — that day of sacrifice is not so long past, and in that day it was done here."

"And?"

"And your lucky Greek was the one to be chosen! He was fed well as one would fatten an ox for the knife. He had some knowledge of simple remedies, and in brewing herbs for their sick he had also stolen the opportunity for the further addition to his coat of color. He was to them an Indian of an unknown tribe, yet, since he was to be offered to the gods, he was made the very center of ceremonial dances, and infernal heathenish customs.

"Both men and women enter into certain sacred — or infernal orders, whose ceremonies are only known to those initiate. An inter-tribal connection is kept up in such societies between villages speaking a totally different language,— even though the tribes be at war, there is always a truce for these wild creatures who dance together for some magic, or some prayer to their false gods."

"And the truce is kept?"

"It would not be possible for a tribe to break truce of their diabolical things of their spirits. At the ceremonies for the sacrifice to the comet god was a girl of another tribe, and when the Greek noted that her desire was not to see him destroyed, he had the first glimpse of hope,— the only other he had was

to remove the stain in some way, and convince them that their gods had made a miracle to save him."

The priest made a gesture towards the great sand drifts at every side of rock wall and column.

"To which of you would it occur, if hiding meant chance of life — to which of you would it occur to go under that sand for days so close to the trail that the women with the water jars would pass you scores of times in a day carrying water from this pool?"

"This pool? — this —"— the eyes of Don Ruy lightened —"this is then that place of the great danger?"

"A man could not hide in the sand like that — nor deceive these wild trailers of animals," decided Don Diego —"and of a certainty it could not be close to the trail!"

"So we would naturally think," decided Padre Vicente. "But the Indian girl was wiser than our wisdom, Señor, for she did aid his escape, and she did hide him there. To get breath, his face was touching a great wall of rock against which another was carelessly laid. The place had been chosen with a knowledge that seemed inspired — for only close to the trail where the sand was like to be disturbed by naked romping children,— only there in all these deserts could he have been hidden from their hunters."

"Here? — in this place?" again said Don Ruy. "Holy father it is a good story — yet sounds a romance fantastic to fit this weird place of the pool and the star shine of the night?"

"By the name of these people, the Queres, and the name of the village Ah-ko, this should be the place of the sacrificial intentions," said the priest. "By the careful account given, this is the pool to which the trail led, and it may even be that the ancient Cacique

to whom, but now, I gave the cigarro, was chief priest of the sacrifice in that day."

"A truly delectable neighbor for a help to pleasant fancy," said Don Ruy and laughed. "If the amiable devil should be moved to sacrifice now, I would be the nearest to his hand — think you he would make ill use of my youth and tenderness?"

"His Sanctity, the padre was indeed wise that no word of this was breathed in the viceregal ears of Mexico," said Don Diego with a testiness not yet subdued over the question of utter damnation for the souls unregenerate. "Piety would carry me far — but no warrant is mine to follow even the Highest where cannibals do wait for unholy sustenance!" and he arose and bowed to Don Ruy.

"Oh — Name of the Devil!" said his noble ward, and laughed and stretched his legs. "I may not be so unholy as your words would suggest. Give not a dog a bad name in the days of his youth!"

And at this the scandalized and pious dignitary multiplied words to make clear how far from such meaning were his devoted intentions. But if wild tribes must be fed ere their souls could be reached,— victims could be found other than the heir of a duchess!

At which outburst Don Ruy suggested that he save his pious breath and devote it to prayers, and to take some of his own medicine by remembrance that soul of king and soul of peasant weighed the same before high God.

"After which devout exhortation from your servant, good father, we again give ear to the tale of that devil's disciple — the Greek Teo," he said, "Did they find him in the sand? And did the merciful dame hide in the sand also? — if so the prison

might not be without hope. Holy Saint Damien! — to think that the man walked these same stony heights — and drank from that pool!"

"They never found him in the sand." The priest ignored the other frivolous comment. "They never found him anywhere, and a slave from the Navahu people was made a sacrifice in his stead. The strange girl was a Te-hua medicine maid or magic learner of things from the wise men of Ah-ko. Her prayers were very many, and very long, and she made a shrine for prayer on the sand beside the stone wall where he was hidden. Their men set watch on her, she knew it, but not anything did they find but a girl who made her prayers, and gave no heed to their shadowings.

"When were ended her days of devotion to the false gods — then she ate, and drank, and took the way to her own people; with moderate pace she took that trail north, but when night came, she ran like the wild thing she was, again to the south, crept unseen again into this fortress, and led the rescued man as far to the west as might be until the dawn came. With the coming of the sun, came also a sand storm of great stress, and all trace of their steps were covered, and the medicine maid saw in that a mystic meaning.

"To Turk and Spaniard the refugee might be only Teo the Greek, a fugitive from all high courts. But to the Indian he was a lost God of the Great Star for whom even the desert winds did duty. When with moistened yucca root he rubbed his hands that the white skin showed, she bent her head to the sand, and was his slave until . . . the end!"

"It moves well, and beautifully smooth: — this tale of the outlaw," agreed Don Ruy —"but it is that end we are eager for — and the how it was compassed

— that she turned slave — or mistress — or both in one, as alas! — has chanced to men ere our day! — was the doom expected from the earliest mention of the pitiful and most devout lady — devout to her devils! But of the end — the end?"

"The end came to him long after they parted, and for one winter and one summer were their wanderings to the west. Of the Firebrand river deep between rock walls he had heard, and of the ocean far beyond, and of Mexico to the south. To reach the river they crossed dry leagues of desert and lived as other wild things lived. But the river was not a thing for boats or journeys, and they went on beyond it seeking the sea. Strange things and strange lives they passed on the way. His skin had been stained many times and his beard was plucked out as it grew. Enough of Indian words he learned to echo her own tale to the brown savages, and the tale was, that they were medicine people of Te-hua in the land of Pō-sōn-gé, and that they travelled to the shores of the sea for dances and prayers to the gods there. And sometimes food was given them — and some times prayers were sent in their keeping. Thus was their journey, until in the south, in the heart of a desert they found the place of the palms where the fruit was ripe, and the water comes from warm springs, and looks a paradise — but is as a hell when the sand storms come: — and human devils live to the South and by the Sea of Cortez.

"They knew nothing of that, it was a place for rest, and a place of food, and they rested there because of that, and gathered food for the further journey.

"All medicine people of the tribes carry on their neck or in a pouch at the belt, some sacred things of

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their magic practices, and under the palms, when other amusment was not to be found, it pleased him to see what his brown girl carried hidden even from her master. It took much persuasions, for she felt that evil would happen if it was shown except it be a matter of ceremony. Then she at last took from the pouch, salt from a sacred lake, feather and claw and beak of a yellow bird, a blade of sharpest flint, and — this!"

He again held the piece of gold that they might see it. Even the Indians leaned forward and looked at it and then eyed the white men and each other in silence. To them it was "medicine" as the priest told the adventurers it had been to the Te-hua girl.

"Your Greek pirate of the good luck went close to madness at the certain fact that for months he had been walking steadily away from the place where this was found. To the girl it was a sacred thing hidden in the earth of her land by the sun — and only to be used for ceremonies. The place where it grew was a special hidden place of prayer offering."

"Faith! — we all must learn prayers enough to get our share! — if prayer will do the work!" said Don Ruy.—"Chico, it means that you get an Indian primer,— and that you find for me a brown enchantress. His reverence will grant us all a special indulgence for hours of the schooling!"

Señor Don Brancadori sat up very straight and shook his head at the priest: — so well assured was he that enough liberties would be taken without the indulgences of holy church. Moreover it was not well to put the deviltries of camp in the mind of so good a lad as Chico.

"And the girl gave to him the gold and told him its hiding place?" he asked.

"We may say she gave it — thought in truth she declared it could not be given — it could only be made a barter of for other medicine, but it must be strong medicine. The blade of flint was to guard her magic symbols if need be, and the man, her master, saw in that moment that the mind he had to deal with in this matter was an Indian mind, in which there is not reason. And to find a "medicine" potent for charms was a task set for a man in the place of the palms."

"Then a forgotten thing came into his mind. It had been a vow made to an enticing creature of San Lucar. She was also devout as a young nun. The vow was of a return — and no doubt of other meetings. The end of it was that she gave him a rosary — (his first captors coveted that and took care of it). But also they ate together of fruit, and as both ladies and gallants do strange things at strange times, the lady divided the seeds, and counted them seeking a lucky number or some such freakish quest. And by the rosary, and by his mother, she made him swear that when he had found fortune and a plantation in the new world, he would plant with his own hands the seeds there, and send for the lady to come by ship as chatelaine! Failing the plantation, he was to return, and her own relatives would find on land or sea an office fit for his talents: — only he was to faithfully guard the seed of the friut eaten in a happy hour, and her prayers would meet his own across the waters.

"It may be that women with prayers for him had not been plentiful — whatever the vow was it was made and sealed with the prayer of the lady. When the savages took her rosary they gave no heed to some brown seeds in a leather pouch — no more of

them than you could count on your fingers! A man alone for long in a wilderness gives meaning to things he would not remember at happier times. And the training of the Holy Church returns to even the most hardened men in their hours of stress! So it was that the prayer of the willing dame kept him company, as he looked on the seeds. They had become his rosary — and were the last evidence of the nightly prayers promised by the lady.

Thus: — because of their smallness had they been unnoted of his several captors. Having slipped between the lining and the cover of the pouch he had ceased to remember them after the Indian maid lessened his loneliness. But he went searching for them now — even one peach seed was still with them — and some grains of the bearded wheat — that by a special grace had fallen into a pocket on ship board while handling grains, and as a jest on himself he had added it to the others for the plantation to be made for the waiting dame.

"He could truly say they were "medicine" given with prayers. But with forgetfulness of truth, he also added much as to their divine origin — and the wondrous power they held.

"Gladly the Indian girl let go the gold for the unknown seeds! She further signified that now she could know always that he was a God, for the gift of the seeds fitted some myth of her own land — some thing of one of their false gods who brought seeds and fruits and great good to the people.

"In that way was made the exchange of medicine for medicine beside some pool by the palms, and well it was it was made that day, else never would we have this golden guide! For: — it fell out that a day later as he was hunting to the south, he was

surrounded and taken prisoner by the savages who range by the inland sea of California. The gold had a hole as you see, he pulled hair from his head, tied the nugget in the braid, and thus hid it for the next two years of his life. The girl he never again heard of. She would die of a certainty alone in the desert.

" A missionary of our order found the man in the wilderness. They were exiles, the two for the length of a winter, and the Greek listened to the tales of the lost fleet on which Don Teo sought the new world, and also of the royal order for his arrest following on the next ship. For a prisoner of Solyman the Magnificent had escaped from the galleys of the Turk, and wild tales were told of princes of the North who gave aid to the traffic in Christian slaves. Don Teo was by all means to be taken back to Spain that the Holy Office learn through him the names and numbers of the offenders! "

" Good it is to hear that the varlet was not let sleep sound all the night! " decided Don Ruy.

" It appears there were many nights when sleep kept from him — to judge by his confessions! " said the priest. But to go into deeper hell while he was yet alive did not march with his wishes, and while he half inclined to the desert again, that he might die quietly there as any other starved wild thing does die: — a thing came which he had not thought: — the padre died of a serpent's sting, and he, Teo the Greek, was alone, and apart from the world again!

" It was the gown for which the savages had reverence — and he took the consecrated robe from the dead padre and wore it — he had been driven by misfortune back to Holy Church!

" He lived under the name of the padre as a priest in holy orders. His reports to his superior were well

counterfeited as the writing of the man he had buried. He held that mission as the extreme outpost for three years. He died there of a fever, but not until I had found him, and confessed him. The gold and the tale of his wanderings he gave to me. Much of it he told me more than once, for when men are exiles as he was for those several years, the things of the old life loom up big with significance. He felt that he was the *finder* of *the way,* and that mayhaps, Mother Church, so long forgotten by him, would be the richer that he had lived. Masses were said for the girl dead in the desert. She had saved him, and for a little while of life — he had given her love!"

"He may have made a most righteous end — since it was no longer in his power to do evil!" commented Don Ruy —"But your pirate priest would never have let go the nugget for masses if the breath of life had kept him company."

"Who knows! — the high God does not give us to see in the heart of the other man," said Padre Vicente —"In the years of his trial he was made to feel his sins against Holy Church — and when the girl died in the desert, another life died with her. Even men of sin do give thought to such matters."

But Juan Gonzalvo who hated him, swore at the ill luck of his escape by death, and no one felt any pity for that first white pilgrim across the Indian lands. All of them however gave speech of praise to the priest's telling of the story. Don Ruy gave him leave to tell romances in future rather than preach sermons.

The men were vastly interested to learn at last the exact region of their destination — and that the province where the yellow metal had been hidden by the

sun was but a matter now of a few days more of journeying — since the people of Ah-ko had brother Queres in settlements adjoining the settlements of the Te-huas.

So, seeing that the guard was good, and that each arquebus was near, and in readiness if need be for dusky visitors, the company fell asleep well content. Only Don Ruy strolled over the path through the sand and tried to fancy how the girl and the Greek had managed the hiding there. A little of the story had been told him in the monastry when the great plan had been made, but no names were given, and the telling of it this night had been a very different matter — he had so lately crossed the desert where those two refugees had wandered, that the story had now a life unknown before. Even the sand billows and the rock walls of the mesa spoke as with tongues. The mate to this wonderful Ah-ko could not, he thought, be in the world any where, and the romance of the young priestess and the Greek adventurer fitted the place well and he felt that the priest of the wild places had chosen rightly in keeping the story until they had climbed to this place where the story of the gold had its beginning.

As he retraced his steps, they took him past the sleeping place of José and his wife of Mexico. Beside them was spread the blankets of Chico, but the lad was not there,— he was standing apart, at the edge of the sheer cliff, looking out over the desert reaches where the sand was blue grey in the star light.

"Hollo!"— said Don Ruy and halted in surprise, "do you select sentry duty when you might sleep soft on the sand? Must I send you another blanket to woo you to a bed?"

"Your Excellency has been most generous in the

matter of the blanket — one has been enough to keep record of your kindly heart."

"Then why not enjoy your sleep as a hearty lad should? Has this place of wonder bewitched you — or has the story of the Greek and the gold stirred you into ambitions beyond repose?"

The lad might have retorted by reminding Don Ruy that he also was abroad while his company slept, — usually a glib pertness would have answered his employer, but the answer came not readily, and when it did,— his excellency saw in a surprised moment that the boy was not such a child as the careless company fancied him.

"I have thought nothing of the Greek — and little of the gold," he said. "But the woman who followed the love and the man across the deserts — and who died alone somewhere in the sands like a starved dog — of her I was thinking! All the magic she had learned could not save her from hell when that one man came in her path!"

"But — you are only a lad and may not understand these things,"— said Don Ruy —"The girl may have died like that, it is true, but the hell in the life she perhaps never got glimpse of,— since she loved the man!"

"But if the dead do know, would not a sort of hell be hers when she learned she had given the magic medicine of her God for the idle gift — bestowed by another mistress?"

Then the lad marched to his blankets and wrapped himself in them, leaving Don Ruy the question to ponder.

CHAPTER IX

YAHN, THE APACHE

"BROTHERS: — you of the life
— Of also the fire divine!
You of the mountains
Of also the Mother Mist!
Out of the mist is a voice.
It is not the voice afraid!
Out of the shadows,
Out of the forests,
Out of the deserts
It is born!
In a good hour it is born.
The wind of the Sun sends it breath!
Brothers: — the Dawn drives the Darkness
And in the mountain strong
No one sings fear!
Out from far worlds it comes,
With the strong Dawn it comes
Brothers: — be mountain strong
Sing not of fear!"

The rising sun tipped the terraces with gold and rose, and the nude brown men, and the men children, faced the east with hands lifted to greet the coming of the Great Power. This was as it had been since the time of most ancient days.

But the song chanted from the terrace by the Woman of the Twilight was a new song, and the men made their prayers, and wondered at the singer singing thus on the roof of her dwelling.

The dew of the hills was on her clothing and on her hair. She had dreamed a dream and walked in the night until the words of the dream had come to her lips, and when they came she sang them aloud and the people listened, and the men went from their prayers and thought about it.

Many were conscious of secret thoughts of dread at the coming of the strangers. The priestess had spoken of the thing no one had given voice to.

From the day when her son had been honored as Po-Ahtun-ho, the strife of existence seemed ended for Sāā-hanh-que-ah. The thing she had lived to see was now accomplished. Her days were now the gray days of rest and of mystery. She made many prayers alone in the hills, and forgot to eat.

She was not old, yet to Tahn-té she said, "It is over: — The time is come when you stand alone to be strong. Your work is now the work of the strong man, and I go to make prayers in the hills."

When she stayed over long, he sought her out lest ill should come to her, and more than once he had walked into the village with his mother in his arms as other people carried the little children. It was the Woman of the Twilight, and no one laughed. At any other woman they would have laughed to see her carried in the arms of a man.

And so, when she stood on her terrace and spoke of the voice of the Dawn and the Mountain Mists, all listened. The men talked of it in the kivas of each clan, and the women talked all together, and were glad. They did not know quite what their fear had been, but it was no longer with them since the woman of the God Thoughts said the voices sang no fear.

Only Yahn Tsyn-deh on the terrace opposite, strung

together claws of birds for a necklace, and scoffed warily.

"Only if you are mountain strong need you have no fear," she said. "The promise that her son is maybe the Voice and the Dawn is a good promise — but the wise woman of the hill caves is double wise! Her song has double thoughts. Be you all mountain strong, as gods are strong, and no fear will come! But if the mountain strength waits not at your door — what then happens?"

No one knew, and the women looked at each other in question. The peace of the wise woman's words was killed by the bitter laugh of Apache Yahn.

When the bitter mood touched the girl, the Te-hua people remembered that her mother was of that wild Apache people — enemy to all. At times she could be a maid like other maids — with charm and laughter — a very bewitching Yahn who made herself a beauty barbaric with strings of gay berries of the rose, or flat girdles of feathers dyed like the rainbow. Her bare arms had bracelets of little shells. Into the weaving of her garments she had put threads of crimson in strange patterns — they were often the symbols of the Apache gods or spirit people, and when she chose she made the other women feel fear with them. Her own mother who told her of them, would not have worn them thus — but Yahn was more Apache than her mother.

One woman shelling corn for the meal, suggested that if the Te-hua people had not mountain strength it might mean war as the people to the South had endured that other time — when the men at Tiguex were burned to ashes by the strangers.

"Oh, wise Säh-pah!" and Yahn laughed at the

late thought,—"Has the thing at last come to the mind of one of you?"

"I thought of it also," said one of the other women sulkily.

"Ai: — you all thought — but none of you dared say words while the new Ruler and the wise governor kept silent to the people!" she taunted them. "Of all the women I only can speak in the speech of the strangers."

"Think you we will see them?" asked one girl doubtfully —"will we not all be sent to the hills the days when they come?"

"In other villages they did so in that long ago day — some men never let their women be seen of the white men who wore the iron."

"I will not be sent to the hills," decided Yahn. "From Ke-yemo and from Tahn-té I know their words. I will talk for the strangers. I will learn many things!"

"When was it you learn so much?" asked Säh-pah jealously.

"A little — little at a time all these years!" declared Yahn in triumph. "Tahn-té wanted not to forget it — so he said to me the words — now they are mine."

The women regarded her with a wonder that was almost awe,— there might be something infernal and unlucky in talking two ways.

"If it be war, think you Ka-yemo will be the war chief as he has been made?" queried Säh-pah. "He will be made second if there is fighting,— think you not so?"

Yahn apparently did not think, but she did listen.

"We know how it was with his father Awh-we —" said one. "In that day of trial he failed that once

in the battle with the Yutah. The old men let him pull weeds in the corn when the next war came."

The strong fingers of Yahn broke the bird's claw, and she tossed it from the terrace edge, and selected another.

"But the new young wife Koh-pé may make the son of his father brave for all that," and Säh-pah who was not young and not winsome, watched Yahn, and felt content when she saw the Apache eyes grow narrow and the teeth set. "A wife with many robes and many strings of shells and blue stones, makes a man strong to fight for them. Ka-yemo will be a strong man now."

"He is of my clan — Ka-yemo!" said Yahn panting with pent up fury, "he can fight,— all of our blood can fight! — if the war is here we can show you of the Panyoo clan how the Tain-tsain clan can fight with the new enemy!"

They all knew that Yahn Tsyn-deh could indeed fight, she wore eagle feathers and had a right to wear them since a season of the hunt on the Navahu border when a young warrior had stolen her for his lodge, and with his own club set with flint blades, had she let his spirit go on the shadow trail, and to her own village had she brought the scalp and the club, also his robe and beads of blue and of green stone — and she made the other women remember it at times.

"Ho! — and will it be you who bears a spear and a shield and a club on that day?" asked Säh-pah the skeptic.

"I fight that day — or any day, as strong as the fight any man of yours can ever make!" This retort of Yahn was met with half frightened giggles by the other women. Säh-pah had been unlucky in the matter of men. Yet, her list of favorites had not

been limited, and the sarcasm of Yahn was understood.

"It is good there is some one brave to meet the strangers!" and the smile of Säh-pah was not nice. "Maybe you go to ask for a man — maybe it is why you learn their words — maybe the Tain-tsain clan will ask for a white man for you!"

"When *I* ask — I will not be made a laugh, and sent home with a gift,"—and the other women squealed with shrill laughter and had great joy over the quarrel. The eyes of Säh-pah blazed. She tried to speak but her fury gave voice only in throaty growls, and an older woman than all of them stepped between them in protest.

"To your own houses — all you who would fight!" she decided —"go fight your own men if they send you away with gifts, but by my door I do not want panthers who scream!"

Säh-pah sulkily obeyed, and Yahn laughed and continued her work.

"It is not good to laugh when the bad fortune comes to any one," said the old woman, but Yahn refused to be subdued.

"It is true, mother —" she insisted — (all elderly women are mothers or aunts to village folk) — it is true. When the dance of the corn was here and the women made choice of their favorites — it is well known that Säh-pah did follow Phen-tza a long ways. He laughed at her." Yahn herself laughed as she told it,—"he laughed and he asked why she comes so far alone — and he gives her his blanket and goes away! That is how he takes her for favorite that day! — he only laughs and let go his blanket to Säh-pah!"

The old woman put up her hand that her laugh

be not heard. The humor of primitive people is not a delicate thing, and that the blandishments of Säh-pah had been of no use — as was witness the blanket! — had made many laugh around the night fires. Yet the old "mother" thought it not good that quarrels should grow out of it.

"Is your heart so bright with happiness that you understand nothing of the shame another woman may know, Yahn Tsyn-deh?" — she asked seriously. "Säh-pah is of the free woman — and we are not of her clan to make judgement."

"Speak no words to me of a bright heart!" said Yahn, and arose, and went away. Across the roofs she went to the stairway of her dwelling, where she had lived alone since the death of her mother. It was a good room she entered, very white on the walls, and the floor white also, with the works of her own fingers on the smoothness of it. In a niche of the thick wall stood a bronze god, and a medicine bowl with serrated edges, and a serpent winged and crowned painted in fine lines to encircle it. On the wall was a deerskin of intricate ornamentation, good and soft in the dressing, it was painted in many symbols of the Apache gods and the prayer thoughts. From her mother Yahn had learned them and had painted them in ceremonial colors. The great goddess of the white shell things — and white flowers — and white clouds — was there, and the sun god was also there, and the curve of the moon with the germ of life in its heart. The morning star was there — and also the symbol of the messengers from the gods. Circling all these sacred things was the blue zig-zag of the sky lightening by which Those Above send their decrees to earth children who know

THE PRAYER OF YAHN TSYN-DEH

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the signs, and at each corner the symbols of the Spirit People were on guard.

Säh-pah had said once that they might be devil things, and not god things, and Yahn had watched her chance, and emptied a jar of dirty water on her head for that, and no more women said things of the walls of Yahn Tsyn-deh's house. But whether she deemed them holy or not holy, she hung the necklace of birds' claws under the symbol of the Goddess Stenaht-lihan, and then prostrated herself and lay in silence.

After a long time she spoke.

"All this that the Apache blood be not lost in the flood of a shame! All this that no Te-hua woman ever again sees that my heart has been sick — all this that a double curse of —"

But in the midst of her words of whispered prayer speech failed her — and tears choked her until she sobbed for breath. With all her will she wished to curse some one whom all her woman's heart forbade her harm!

CHAPTER X

SHRINES OF THE SACRED PLACES

WHEN new things cast shadows across the Indian mind, every cloud touching the moon is watched at its birth and at its first hours of the circle, also the stars. And for those other worlds,— the planets — is it their brotherhood to the earth that is sealed by a living sacrifice as they come and as they pass again from the visible path in the sky?

The Reader of the Stars lives often above the mists of the earth dews. The door of the high priest Po-Ahtun-ho faces the way of the South that the shadows of the moon and the shadows also of the sun, make reckonings for him of that which must be noted. So it has been since ancient days.

But for the Reader of the Stars there is a door not like another door; even to the stranger who runs as in a race, the house of the stars is seen and noted, and known as the sacred place for high prayer, and the record of the God things.

In Pu-yé the Ancient — and the deserted through centuries, the dwellings of high priests are marked beyond shadow of doubt, and each Te-hua man knows as well the dwelling of the Ruler of five centuries ago in Pu-yé, as he knows the door of his own brother across the court of the village. And the door of the stars is still beautiful there in Pu-yé.

Day time or night time the lines of ancient dwellings look ghost-like in their whiteness. Only medi-

cine men with prayer rites ever sit alone in the deserted rooms. The men from the river villages on the way for the pine of the hills used in their sacred dances, do halt to scatter prayer meal at sacred places where the water once ran: — there is ever the hope that if prayers enough are thought, the springs in the Mother Mountain may make fertile again the fields of the high levels,— for in the days of the carving of Pu-yé from the white cliffs there were certainly many streams and wide harvests in the land that is called now the desert lands.

And to the west is Tse-cōme-u-piñ, the sacred mountain where the lightning plays, and westward also, but not so far, is the Cave of the Hunters where prayers are made to the Trues — the guardian spirits of the Sacred Ways, and the wild things of the forest, symbolizing sacred ways and sacred colors. These places of prayer and of sacrifices are here to-day — and the way to them is marked by the symbols of stars and of planets — many eyes see them — but the readers of them are not so many to-day. A Te-hua man will tell you they are the forgotten records of the Lost Others — and will sprinkle prayer meal craftily to make amends for the truth which is half a lie. The unspoken pagan gods of the Lost Others have endless life, and eternal youth, in the land.

All is as it was in the ancient day, except that the dwellings have changed from the ancient places, and the priests go over more ground to reach the high places of prayer.

In the valley of the Pō-sōn-gé many vigils were kept through the nights of the Springtime, as messages from the south brought word of the steady, and thus far, harmless advance of the white strangers. The treachery at Tiguex in the day of Coronado was

a keen memory. It would take much wisdom to avoid war with the iron men of the white god, yet keep their own wives and daughters for their own tribe.

Many arrows were made — also spears and shields. Men went hunting and women dried the meat, pounding it into shreds for the war trail if need be. From earliest dawn were heard the grinding songs as the corn of yellow and blue and red and white was ground by the maidens keeping time to the ancient carols — and ever above the head of the worker was hung the sacred and unhusked ear, which, when resting, she contemplated, kneeling, and the thought in her heart must be the sacredness of the life-giving grain, and the prayer of thanks that it was given by the gods to the people.

Tahn-té, going from the river bath of the dawn, crossed the terrace of Yahn Tsyn-deh, and caught brief glance of her face thus lifted above the grinding stone. The steadiness of the quiet prayer was contrast decided, compared with the last wild prayer she had come to make at his feet: — begging for magic of any nature since the laws of the clans forbade that she be wife to her cousin to whom she had given love.

Almost he halted, moved in his mind to speak to the girl who had been more of comrade than had any other woman. But he remembered the evil prayer she had spoken that day, and this was not a time to give to thought of her anger. It was bad to have the evil wish of a woman, but to the other man must go the cares of the village loves and hates. All things had worked together to make him the wearer of the white robe — to place him outside the lines of village joys or sorrows,— his every demand was for

YAHN AT THE GRINDING STONE

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vision of the strongly felt, yet unseen powers. Was he the son of a god? — as in the heart of him he still thought: — then to him belonged the fasting and the prayer of tribal penance, and the loves and the hates of the children of Te-hua were luxuries not for him. He was enemy to no man — and he could be lover to no woman!

The old men of his own orders had taught him much of the strength of magic which comes only to the priest who seeks no earthly mate. But the ten years of study of the white man's magic as spoken in their books of their gods, had taught him more. He had been witness that their gods were strong for war, and for worldly power. His people had need of all that power if the strangers came again and again like this into the country of the Pō-sōn-gé.

The picture of Yahn, kneeling by the fireplace on the terrace, her eyes lifted to the sacred corn, brought quickly to him the memory of a more childish Yahn who was not unhappy even in her wars.

And now — through the madness, which he was warned came to all men — now she was a woman through that madness: — and a forsaken woman whom all Te-hua watched for the revenge she would take.

They knew Ka-yemo could not marry with the daughter of his uncle, but they knew also that he could not be driven into taking the daughter of another man as wife,— and Yahn knew this also. Many robes, and blue jewels had weighed down the love of a boyhood!

Tahn-té thought of this, and of the girl, as he passed through the village to his own dwelling. Other maids greeted him, and followed him with kindly eyes. By all women Tahn-té was told in

many ways that the wearer of the white robe need not live in a lonely house!

Yet he was not lonely, and when the marvels of the inviting eyes turned towards him, he was always conscious of an ideal presence as if the god-maid of the mesa had stepped between, and made harmless the sorcery of the village daughters by which he might otherwise have been enveloped.

Once, when he had confessed as much to the ancient Ruler who had been his guide and guardian, the old man had voiced approval and interpreted clearly for him the dream presence which was as a gift of the gods, and clearly marked him for other loves than that of an earth maid.

"But — if the dreams came like a maid also — but a maid so fine that it was as a star — or a flower — or a prayer made human — then —"

"It is like that?" asked the old man, and the boy answered:

"Sometimes it seems like that — but not when I awake. Only in my sleep does she come close, yet that dream has kept guard for me many days until the others laugh and say I have no eyes to see a woman, I do see — but —"

"That is well — it is best of all!" said Kā-ye-fah, the Ruler. "If my own child had come back to me I might not have said it is well. My heart would have wanted to see your children and the children of Kā-ye-povi — I dreamed of that through many harvests — but it is over now. She did not live. The trader of robes from the Yu-tah brought that word, and it is better that way. I was dying because my daughter would be slave to Navahu men — and when word comes that she died as a little child, then the sun is shining for me again, and I live again. But

always when I think that the little child could be a woman, then it is good to think that your children could be her children. Since it is so — so let it be! The dream maid of the spirit flower, and of the star, can be my Kā-ye-povi, and you will have the mate no other earth eyes can ever see, and your nights and your days will not be lonely. Also it will be that your prayers be double strong."

From that day of talk, the dream maid of Tahn-té had been a more tangible presence — never a woman — never quite that, but in the smile of certain children he caught swift glimpse of her face and then music rang in the rustle of the corn or the rush of the river. When the dream vision was beyond all measure sweet, he was certain of the wisdom of the Ancient — for the dream and the thoughts of prayer were double strong.

They were double strong that morning as he came from the river bath, and the face of Yahn — and the thought of her love — brought strangely that dream face to him in which there was no madness such as the Apache had shown him when at his feet in prayer.

The tombé sounded softly from a far terrace where special prayer was being made for the growing things, gray doves fluttered home with food to their young, and little brown children — not so much clothed as the birds! — climbed ladders to look in the dove cotes on his roof, and see the nurslings there lift clamoring mouths for worms or other treasure.

A woman weaving a blanket of twisted skins of rabbits worked in the open with her primitive loom in an arbor before her door, beside her a man whirled a distaff and spun the coarse hemp of which the warp was made. Maids and mothers with water jars on their heads walked in stately file from a spring near

the river's edge — and above all the serene accustomed life of that Indian village, could be heard the drone of the grinding songs — in the valley of Pō-sōn-gé there was ever corn for the grinding, and the time of hunger had come not often to Povi-whah.

Tahn-té felt a certain consciousness of the great content to which the grinding songs and the steady beat of the prayer drum made music. He knew better than the others, the worth of that peace, and quiet plenty, for to the south he had seen hunger stalk in the trail of the white conquerors, and no woman weaving a robe could be sure that it would ever keep her children from the cold. The men of iron had entered doors as they chose and carried thence all manner of things pleasing to their fancy.

But the life of Povi-whah was a different life, and Tahn-té was glad often to know that it was his land. The great medicine Mesa of the Hearts stood like a guardian straight to the east and at morning its shadow touched the terraces.

Strange mystic rites belonged to that place where the Ancient Others had made high sacrifice. Great medicine was there for the healing of all the nations — and the secret of it was with the gods. He was glad as he looked at it that it was so close to his own people — if a day of need should come they would have the sacred place more close than any other people.

As he breathed a prayer and walked to his own door he met Po-tzah who was the Feeder of the Wind that fanned the Wheat. He was the first boy friend of Tahn-té in the valley and always their regard had been kind.

" This is a time of much striving and I am glad to

see you, and see you here at my door," said Tahn-té the Ruler. "You come from the ceremonial bath after a night of prayer. I go from the bath for the making of many days and many nights of prayer. If my mother should return before I come down from the mountains —"

"She will be in the house of my wife, and she will be as our mother," said Po-tzah his friend and clansman.

"Thanks that it is so in your heart," and Tahn-té took the hand of his friend and breathed upon it. "My mother must not hear much talk of any trouble to come. If she thought there was danger she would not go from me, and in council it is decided that when the men of iron come into the valley, the young wives and the little maids must live for a season in the ruins of the wide fields of old, and my mother — the 'Woman of the Twilight' is to be the keeper of them there, and they must not be seen of the strangers."

"They take many wives — if they find them — and are strongest?" asked Po-tzah thinking of his own wife of a year, and the little brown babe in its cradle of willow wands swung from the ceiling of their home. Tahn-té smiled mockingly.

"Their priest will tell you they take but one. But their book where their god speaks, gives to all his favorites many wives, and helps his favorites to get them with fighting and much cunning, and in the days when I was with the christian men who said prayers to that god, I saw them always live as the book said — and not as Padre Luis said. That man was a good man — a better man than his book — He was good enough to be Indian — for that is what the Castilians call us — and all our brother tribes."

" They call us the same as the Apache or the Hopi people? " asked Po-tzah in wonder. " Why do they that? "

" The Ancient Father in the Sky has not wished them to know who we are. He has darkened their minds when they tried to see. They are very proud — that people! All they saw that was good in the villages, they argued long about They are sure that some of their tribe in some older day did find our fathers and teach our people,— in what other way could we know to spin and weave, and live in good houses! "

The Priest of the prayers to the mighty Wind of the Four Ways laughed at the very curious ideas of the white strangers.

" Perhaps they taught our fathers also to eat when they were hungered and take wives when the time came! " he scoffed.

While they spoke, Ka-yemo crossed a terrace and halted to look at them, and Po-tzah commented on the fine beads now worn by Ka-yemo since he had taken a wife — but Po-tzah thought the wife very ugly and very stupid, and he would rather see his own wife even if her father had been a cripple and a poor man,— and the girl have never a garment but a poor one of her own making.

" Ka-yemo is the most beautiful man in the village," said Tahn-té,—" He has fine looks plenty for one house."

" Tahn-té "— and his friend came more close and spoke softly, " you are Po-Ahtun-ho, and you know wise things and many things. Do you know enough to care nothing that Ka-yemo and his friends are not your friends? "

KA-YEMO

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"Why is it that you think in such a way?" asked Tahn-té quietly.

"He knows the white strangers will deal with one man of the tribe if they come,— and that will be honor for that man. He knows the words of the strangers. If you were not the most wise he would be chosen to make all talks, and he would be a great man. Not much has he said; — but his friends say things! Already they ask what magic touched the old men when you were made ruler. They say the Po-Ahtun-ho for all time was born in the place where he says prayers."

"And I was not born in this place," said Tahn-té, as he looked at the river valley, and remembered the desert sands of Tusayan, and the island of rock on which he had lived and been happy once. "It is true, Po-tzah. But the people forget when they say no other Ruler was born apart from his people. Po-se-yemo came from a cave in the cliff. He came down from the mountain to the people. He taught them to listen to mountain thoughts. I come from a rock in the desert, and the old men say I brought the Sign that the god made my way. We are yet young, Po-tzah, when we are older we will know whether the way of the gods is the way for this people. I know the words of Ka-yemo — but they are not to be talked of. Alone I go to face the Ancient Father — Sinde-hési. I go to the mountain of the Stone Face — I go to dance the dance for ancient wisdom. The old men know that the time has come for that."

"Alone? No one in our day has danced alone before the faces! No one has danced in that place since the time of the fire across the sky, and that dancer did not live. You can dance there — Tahn-té?"

"I can dance there — By the arrow I have said it."

His friend looked at him with a strange new regard. Each knew what it meant to be chosen for that dance of the ancient days.

There are two things a man may not do and have breath to live. The sacred arrow is held aloft when an oath is made. If the thing which he has told is a false thing the Sun Father gives lightening to the arrow, and the man of the oath speaks no more, and lives no more. He dies there in that place. All Te-hua men can tell you that is how it is. No one asks another to make an oath.

Also no one asks a medicine man to dance before the ancient picture of the stone in the hills. Only the unmated can dance there. It is the dance to the Supreme Father who is named not often. He is that One who gives earth creatures to the world without earth matings. Thus Po-se-yemo, the mountain god, was given to a maid as her child, and only the eagles and the shadow of the piñon tree knew. He also gave the two sons of wonder to the Apache goddess who slept on the mountain alone under the shadow of a rock reaching out. Water dripped from that rock and brought the birth dream, and the dream came true there in Apache land. Those two sons became the divine warriors. You can see to-day the giants who were demons and who were slain by those two sons who worked together for good on earth. The blood of the giants flowed through long valleys and turned to stone, and the heads of the giants are also stone now, and lie where they were severed from their bodies in the land of Navahu. Thus it has always been when the Ancient Father has sent the God-Thought to the earth. Only the Wind, or the Sun, or the Mist of the Cloud has been mate to the mother.

Yet the sons have been strong for magic and works of wonder.

Thus there has been through the ages, one sacred place where men may go for highest medicine — if they go before it is not too late!

Not since these two men were born had a man danced there, and the last man who did so had danced without the truth or the faith in his heart. No one ever knew if he found great medicine dreams, for he died there. After many days they went — and they found him dead.

"Yes: — it is so," said Tahn-té the Ruler as he met the eyes of his friend. "All may know that I go to the fast, and the dance, and that I dance for them. It will be told from the house tops to-night, but when it is told I will have reached the hills."

"I may not dance, but I also will fast, and I will work with you," said Po-tzah. "Others will work with you when they know. Speak for our children to the god!"

Then he breathed on the hand of Tahn-té who was to do high work and high penance for the tribe, and Tahn-té felt glad music in his heart because of the words of his friend, and when he laid aside his white robe and left his house, he spoke to no other man, but went silent to the shrine on the mesa where the Arrow-Stone clan build the signal fire to the mountain god in the night time. There he said the prayers which were long prayers, and the people who had noted him as he passed (nude but for the girdle and the downy breath feathers of the eagle) halted at their work among the corn and the melon vines and watched him at the shrine. From the terraced roofs also the women turned from their weaving, or the shaping of pottery, and looked after the tall bronze figure girded,

and white plumed. They could see his wide-stretched hands scatter the sacred meal of prayer, and then they saw only a brown runner on the mesa outlined against the western sky. He had entered the ceremonial run in which there is no moment of rest from the mesa of the river to the mountains of the pine.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAID OF DREAMS

INDIAN prayer is not the placid acceptance of thoughts comforting. The complete man is both mind and body — and all of him must work when the gods are called upon for work, and by fasting and exhaustion must the spirit path be made clear for dreams.

The first day Tahn-té had sat in meditation before the sacred wall of the stone face, chanting the songs to the clouds and the yellow birds of the sun color, watching the pictured rock until the lines moved when his body swayed to the chant, and a living thing seemed before him — the accumulated faiths of all the devotees in that place since the god was born!

As the sun went behind the mountain he knew the village herald was telling the people, and the leaders of Povi-whah would fast that night and send their thoughts to him. Po-tzah would fast although Po-tzah was not called upon by his position to do so.

And Po-tzah had said, " Speak for our children to the god."

He seemed to hear Po-tzah's voice, and the words repeat themselves in the dusk, and — stranger still — another voice back of Po-tzah's! it also spoke of children — through the chanted prayer he heard it — baffling yet insistent.

Then he knew it!

He know it as the first shadow of the visions which

the prayer was bringing: — it was the voice of the Ruler whose office he now held — the aged man who had once worn the white robe and said —" If she had not died — her children would be your children! "

The picture of Po-tzah's small brown babe came between him and the sacred figure on the rock,— a strange thing for the voice to suggest! A little child — in the dusk — and — sheltering arms around it!

" Oh You!
Oh — Indwelling God!
Come to me!
Grey ghost — white ghost
Why is the false enchantment?
Grey ghost of darkness —
White ghost of high hills
Make way for sacred magic,
Sink far your darkened spells!
O You!
O Indwelling God
Come to me! "

In the dusk a shadow — or it might have been a drooping bough of the piñon tree — gave outline of a bent head above the outline of the babe — only a strange trick of carving on the gray stone, and swaying branches outlining a head — then the shoulders — then an arm about the babe! To the mind of the mystic it was the visible temptation of a black enchantment in the very presence of the god! — The strongest the opposing powers could send to man under vows of prayer and search for the spirit medicine of the highest thought.

" Oh You!
Goddess of the stars
You — who gives the life!
Why is there for me false magic?

THE SIGNAL FIRE TO THE MOUNTAIN GOD

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Mother mine of the starry skirt
Why for me the darkened star?
I, Master of spells, call to you!
Ho:—there! It is I!
Green and black spirit of power
Seek elsewhere your victims!
I seek the light — I find the light!
Mother mine of the starry skirt
I find the light!
I — Master of spells!"

He was no longer merely a singer of prayers now. The dance before the Ancient gods had begun as the first stars glimmered in the blue.

After many hours of the dance all the world drifts far. There is nothing real left but the circle where the prayer is, and the space where the feet touch in the dull pad-pad on the trail to the swoons where visions come.

A lone figure chanting breathless things: — not aloud now! The utterance is only broken whispers — only a god could read the meaning of them!

But he did not feel alone. All the Lost Others were back of him looking on from the dusk of the piñon boughs, and there to the right, ever in shadow, was a Presence! It stood close to the rock wall. The arms were folded, the line of the body strong and erect. The face was a hidden face, but if he — Tahn-té, faltered in the lines of the prayers,— or sank in the dance before the time — then he felt that the phantom there would become real, and the face would be seen, and that strong Thing would come forward — it would dance for jealous ghosts the dance of triumph — it would wipe out in mockery the unfinished homage to the gods!

The dawn came, and Tahn-té danced the stars of morning into the glow of the sun. The prayers had

been all said, and the Watcher no longer stood by the rock!

Tahn-té saw nothing now but the glare of the sun on the rock wall — a spot of light in the circle of black piñon.

He no longer even whispered. His moving arms seemed no longer a part of him — it was as if numbness was there. His feet moved mechanically — not able to lift themselves more quickly — neither able to cease by his own will.

The Trues were watching him now, waiting to help. There was the white bear of the North and the mountain lion of the East. There was the wildcat of the West, and the serpent of the South. There was the eagle of the upper world, and the mystic creature of the earth home which tells the weather wizards of the number of winter days.

They were all there — so the prayer had been a good prayer.

From some of them would come the medicine dreams!

The sun stood straight above,— then little by little reached towards the mountain. It made shadows, and as the shadow of the sacred rock touched the blinded dancer, he sank to the earth.

As he fell he strove to echo the prayer thought: —

"I find the light
I — master of spells!"

But he did not speak it. Only the eagle of his dream repeated it over and over as it lifted him from the place where he had fallen, and bore him swiftly to the highest point of the mountain of Tse-cōme-upiñ. It has been the Sacred Mountain since men first

spoke words in the land. When a man has climbed to the shrine of the summit there, it is as if all the world is very far below.

And that makes it lonely for the dweller there.

* * * * * * * *

The stars were again alight in the heavens when the devotee awoke from his sleep of exhaustion. To his entranced senses the stars were as the eyes of the gods who watched the shrine where few men had ever danced and lived. The wind touched the pines — and he thought their whispered movement was the rustle of the wings of the eagle who had come in his vision.

For the eagle was now his medicine, and the place where the eagle had carried him in the dream was the best of all good places for medicine that was strong.

In the starlight he again faced the ancient diety of the Lost Others: — those Others who had carved the stone lions of Kat-yi-ti at their entrance to the Under world, and had set the white stone bear of the North on guard in the western hills. They did fine things — those people who had perhaps first named the stars above. And this one ancient cave god of the stone face was a link — so the wise old Ruler had told him — with strange Mexic Brothers of the far south — who gave worship — and gave human sacrifice, to a solitary mountain shrine, called the shrine of the Sleeping Woman, where few men could dance — or even learn the prayers of that dance.

No awesome Presence now faced him in the shadow of the rock as he chanted his prayer of farewell under the stars. He had danced all adverse spirits out of the charmed circle. His way was clearly marked now to follow the way of the eagle,— there on the shrine of Tse-cōme-u-piñ he must say the final prayer.

All of harmony and all of hope was about him. Three days and three nights had he ran or chanted prayers, or danced fasting, yet weariness was not with him as he ended the ceremony which no man since his birth had made in this place.

Somewhere, he would perhaps fall on the trail, and the men of Kah-po or of Povi-whah would find him, as fainting medicine men had been found ere this — but that must be after he had reached the shrine, and gave prayers at the place of the eagle dream.

Past Puyé he went — scarce seeing the ghost walls of the older day; in sight of Shu-finne, the little island of forgotten dwellings on the north mesa — through the pines to the cañon of Po-et-se where rocks of weird shapes stood like gray and white giants to bar his way. He thought at times voices sounded from the stone pillars, but it might be the echo of his own. — He knew evil spirits did lurk along his trail — no mortal could escape their shadows. Even the god who had lived in the sun had been hurled to earth by them when the earth was new, and the first trees — the pines, had begun to grow at the edges of the ice. Since that time the Sun God only lived in the sky one half the time. In the night he went to the Underworld, and the strands of his dark hair covered his face. He must not let himself think that the adverse spirits were less than men in strength — for man needed all the medicine of the gods to war against evil!

Thus he thought — and muttered and stumbled blindly towards the north. Into the stream of Po-eh-hin-cha he crept and drank,— then up — up to Po-pe-kan-eh — the Place where the Water is Born, and from there to the shrine of the Sacred Mountain,

AND REACHED HIS HANDS TO HIS BROTHERS —
THE STARS
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though his hands reached for help from every tree and rock past which he staggered or crept.

Only water and the smoke of the medicine pipe had been his portion. One may not eat the food of man, yet commune with Those Above.

The first stars were above the hills as he fell, bleeding from many hurts — and breathless — at the shrine.

Far above one lone eagle soared, and the weariness was forgotten in the joy of Tahn-té. The sacred spark came quickly to the twigs crossed ceremonially for the fire on the shrine, and into the blue above, the slender trail of smoke led undeviatingly up where the great bird drifted as if awaiting to witness his offering of fire. Had any other found medicine like that? He knew now that his magic was to be strong magic, for his faith had been great — and he had followed the faith, and found the bird of the strong gods waiting his coming!

Time was lost to him in the trance of that which he had lived through. The day was gone, and he stood alone on the heights and reached his hands in ecstacy to his brothers the stars. He felt the exultant strength of the mortal with whom the gods have worked!

And when the last mountain prayer had been whispered, a reeling, staggering, nude figure walked, and sometimes ran and often fell down the steep sides of Tse-cōme-u-piñ, and when the great dark pines and the slender aspens were reached, he used his hands as well as his feet in making his way, reeling from tree to tree, but holding with instinctive steadiness to the trail of the Navahu — the ancient way of the enemy, where ambush and slaughter was often

known. Many captives had been driven between the high rock walls. Youths and maidens swept from Te-hua corn fields, and Navahu captives as well, caught by Te-hua hunters in the hunting grounds to the West,— all came through the one great pass — and the way of the trail was so narrow that to guard it was not a hard thing in time of battle.

The rush of the swift water was always near as he went on and on in the darkness. It had a lulling effect. The whispers of the pines also spoke of rest. This was the fourth day of the fasting. He, Tahn-té, had been strong as few men are strong, but suddenly in the night, earth and sky seemed to meet, and putting out his hands he groped through a thicket of the young pines, and fell there quite close to the dancing water — and all the life of earth drifted far. He, Tahn-té, the devotee of the Trues — the weaver of spells, and dancer of the Ancient Dance to the God of the Stone, lay at last in the stupor beyond dreams, helpless in the path of an enemy if any should trail him for battle.

His sleep was dreamless, and the length of it until the dawn seemed but a hand's breadth on the path of the stars across the sky.

But with the dawn a vision came, and he knew it again as the actual form of that which had been so often the vague dream-maid of charméd moments.

There was the flash of water in the pool — a something distinct from the steady murmur of its ripples — that was the sign by which he was wakened quite suddenly, without movement or even a breath that was loud. Under the little pines at the very edge of the stream he was veiled in still green shadows, and there before him was The Maid of Dreams. Those Above had let her come to him that for once his eyes

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should see and his heart keep her in the medicine visions of this fasting time of prayer.

Not once did she turn her eyes towards him as she stood, dripping with the water of the bath. Her slender figure was in shadow, and her movements were shy and alert and quick.

To the dry sand she stepped, and lifted thence a white deerskin robe. Two bluebird wings were in the white banda about her loosened hair, very blue was the color of the wings as the light touched them, and he thought of the wonderful Navahu Goddess Estsan-atlehi who was created from an earth jewel — the turquoise, and who is the belovéd of the Sun. If a maid could be moulded from any jewel of earth, Tahn-té thought she would look like this spirit of the forest stream. Even while held by the wonder and the beauty of the vision, he thought of this, and recalled the bluebird feathers in the prayer plumes of Tusayan: — next to the eagle they were sacred feathers: — the gods were sending him strong thoughts for magic!

Suddenly the maid stood tense and erect as though listening — or was it only the nearness of a mortal by which she was thrilled to movement? — for she clasped the trailing white skin to her breast, and stepped into the deeper shadow where grew the fragrant thickets of the young pine under the arms of the great pine mothers.

Without sound she moved. His eyes watched in strained eagerness for the one turn of the head, or one look of the eyes towards him, but that was not to be. To mortal all the joys cannot be given at one time — else all would be as gods!

He stared at the shadows into which she had blended herself, and he stared at the pool from which

she had arisen. It was again a mirror reflecting only the coming day. Yet his heart leaped as he saw a sign left there for him!

Drifting idly there in a circle was a bit of blue too vivid for the echo of the sky of dawn — it was the wing of a bluebird, and even as he looked, it was caught in an eddy more swift, and moved on the surface of the water straight to the edge of the bank nearest his place of rest.

Staggering to his feet, he went to meet it. It was not an empty vision as the maid had been, and it did not fade as he grasped it. The visions of the night had been strong visions, but with the dawn had come to Tahn-té the added medicine of the second gift of the Spirits of the Air. Above the clouds must his thoughts be in their height. The medicine of the eagle had made that plain to him, and the feathers of prayer lay in his hand as a sign such as had come to no other man!

The Brothers of the Air were plainly to be his kindred!

This was the dawning of the fifth day on the prayer trail. A little way he walked, and the world reeled about him,— to escape from the cloud of weakness he ran the way of the brook towards the far river — and then as a brook falls into the shadows of a cavern place, Tahn-té fell and lay where he fell. In the darkness closing over him he heard the rustle of wings — though another might have heard only the whisper of the pines.

When the sun stood straight above, and the bush of the sage brooded over its own shadow, it was then Po-tzah and the brothers of Po-tzah found him. They wondered at the wing of the bluebird in his hand, but carried him on a robe of the buffalo until

they brought him to his own home. Then the people of his order brought to him the foods and the drinks allowed after the fasting time to the men who make many prayers.

When the strength had come back he spoke in secret council of the vision of the eagle and the vision of the maid born from the waters of the sacred mountain of prayer.

The old men debated wisely as to the visions and the meaning of the visions. The dance was a great dance and plainly had the favor of Sinde-hési since Tahn-té had come out of it alive; — the Summer People would hold a long feast to mark the time, and the boys who were taught by the old men, would be told in the kivas of the ways in which a man might grow strong in body and strong in spirit to face the god who lives on high in the hills.

Of the visions of the eagles they were glad — for in his dream Tahn-té had been carried by the eagle to the shrine of power, and that was very great medicine. It was well he had kept strength to follow the trail and meet the eagle there.

Of the maid-vision there was long talk. To dream of a maid was the natural dream thought of a young man, and the wing of the bird could be only the symbol for thoughts that fly very high.

The clan of his mother — the Arrow Stone People, thought the vision by the pool meant that the time to choose a wife had come to Tahn-té. He had proven himself for magic. It was now time that he think of strong sons.

The elders agreed that it was so, and talked of likely maids, and that was when the name of Yahn the Beautiful was spoken. But Tahn-té heard part of the talk, and stopped it. He had read the books of the

white god, and out of them all he had found one strong thought. The white god, and the prophets of that god, were strong for magic because they did not take wives of the tribes about them. Because of that they had been strong to conquer their world. He, Tahn-té, meant to work for the red gods as the priests of the dark robe worked for the white gods. He would work alone unless other men worked with him. It was not magic in which a woman could help. But alone he fastened four feathers of a bluebird to the Prayer Flute of the far desert, and in the dusks under Venus and the young moon he breathed through it softly to bring back the vision of the Maid of Dreams.

Not all this talk was spoken of outside the kiva: — only the name of Yahn had been said — and that Tahn-té would have no wife even when urged by the old men. But Koh-pé, the wife of Ka-yemo did hear of it — also some other wives, and Yahn Tsyn-deh heard their laughter, and carried a bitter heart in the days to follow. She had no love for Tahn-té, yet — to wed with the Highest — would be victory over a false lover!

For the feast made for Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho, she would gather no flowers and bake no bread, and when the dance in honor of Tahn-té was danced, she put on her dress of a savage, brown deer skin fringed and trimmed with tails of the ermine of the north. About her brows she fastened a band on which were white shells and many beads in the pattern of the lightening path — and on it was also the white of the ermine — and the warrior feathers of the eagle which she wore not often — but this day she wore them!

Also she took from an earthen jar the strands of

STRAIGHT TO HIM DRIFTED THE BLUEBIRD'S WING

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beads of the Navahu. With head held high she walked through the village and knew well that she looked finer than all the dancers. Thus proudly she walked to the sands by the river's edge, and held the beads against her brow and bosom — and twisted them about her round arms as she gazed at her reflection in the water. But the pride and the defiance died out of her face when there were no jealous eyes to watch, and a tear fell on the still water, breaking the picture.

For a space she stood — a lonely figure despite her trophies —and the music of the dance came to her on the wind, and filled her with sullen rage. A canoe was on the shore above; she pushed it into the water and stepped in lifting the paddle of split ash wood and sending the craft darting downwards — anywhere to be away from the voices of people.

And Koh-pé, of the red beads, laughed at a safe distance, and told her comrades of the terraces that the Apache had gone fishing without a net — she would come home empty!

CHAPTER XII

COMING OF THE CASTILIANS

BECAUSE a runner from Kat-yi-ti had been killed on the trail by a mountain lion, and because the village of Povi-whah had forgotten the strangers from the south in the excitement of Tahn-té's return (for many there were who thought never to see him again!) — because of these things it was that the men of iron rode unseen by the river, and the alarm was called from sentry to sentry on the mesa where the workers in flint shaped the arrow-points, and were guards as well for the village below.

There was no mistaking the glint of sunlight on steel and helmet, and the beasts with strange strappings. The men of the beards were indeed at the very edge of their planted fields!

And they saw more than that, for they saw a girl who ran from the shore to meet them. So fleet was her running that her hair swept like a dusk cloud behind her, and the soldier Gonzalvo stared at her with open mouth.

"By the true cross, that looks better to me than the thimble full of gold!" he announced, and Don Ruy laughed and put his horse on the other side of Don Diego as though to protect him from temptation.

"You, and his reverence the padre, have the records and the prayers to your share," he suggested, —"but eyes bright as those — and lips as tempting —"

"The heathen wench does look like the seven deadly sins for enticement," agreed Don Diego and made the sign of the cross.

"A shameless wench, indeed," agreed Padre Vicente —" with her bosom bare, and little but her hair as a cloak! — What is it she calls? — Holy God! — did you hear?"

All had halted now. Pretty women and girls had been hidden in the villages of their trail. Even if they chanced to glimpse one it was by chance — and among the wall-housed barbarians no dames bold as this one had been seen: — neither had one been seen so alluring.

Again her voice reached them and this time the tones were clear and the words certain.

"Greetings to you — Lords — Castilians!"

A shout went up from the men. At last a land had been reached where an interpreter was not needed for the woman. It put a different complexion on the day. Tired men straightened in their saddles and Ruy Sandoval laughed at the amaze on the face of Gonzalvo — that hardy soldier of many lands stared as if by a witch enthralled.

"How call you yourself, mistress?" inquired the priest coldly, "and is it the custom of the men of the Pō-sōn-gé to send their wives to greet men who travel?"

"Yahn Tsyn-deh I am,"— she said —" and not wife."

"Humph!" the grunt of Maestro Diego was not polite. Even the desert might not be a safe place to bring youth if damsels of this like grew in the sage clumps. "It is said to be a good luck sign when a man comes first over the threshhold on a New Year's day and on a Monday,— it starts the year and

the week aright — and how read you this of a female crossing first for us the line of welcome in the new land of treasure? — read you good fortune here in all that would be ill fortune at home?"

"Save your croaking since she is beautiful to a marvel!" said Don Ruy lightly. "If they tell us truly that the world is round, who knows that we may not be nicely balanced on an opposite to Seville, and all things of life and portent to be reversed? There's a thought for your 'Relaciones!'— treasure it, senor! — treasure it!

"I am not yet of a mind that the unsanctified globe theory is to be accepted by true believers!" announced Don Diego with decision —"that you well know! — and also you know that my scriptural evidence —"

"Is as good as that of any man!" agreed his charge who was more his master and tormentor. "But if we halt here while you make the maps of Cosmo in the sand, we will miss the rest of the maids, for all my looking shows me no others on the run to us."

Yahn was, meanwhile, with great unconcern, making braids of her hair, and breathing with more ease, and using her eyes well the while. The piercing look of the padre was the only one she faltered under, and that of Gonzalvo she met in elusive coquetry.

"I am alone," she said to Don Ruy. "The others feast this day. I know your words. I come alone; maybe you want that I talk for you."

"It is true that we all want much talk from you — and perhaps some smiles — eh? But give not another to Juan Gonzalvo — he looks like a mooing calf from the last one he got,— and I warn you that such special happiness —"

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"Peace!" said the padre with impatient authority. "The girl has understanding, and it is best to move warily when the ground is new. Are you the only one who speaks Castilian?"

"No — two more. Ka-yemo the chief of war — He is of my clan. He learn it with Capitan Coronado."

The men closed around listening — this was the man they had heard of at Ah-ko and at Kat-yi-ti.

"He is the shaman who learned with Fray Luis," said the padre. "We have heard of him, and of his unsanctified devotion to the false gods. We have come to save such souls for the true faith. And he is now Capitan — eh?"

"Ka-yemo is Capitan — not shaman. He speaks your words —"

"And the other one?"

"Other one!"— The face of Yahn darkened, her lips grew straight in a hard line — her bosom heaved. Tahn-té had seen and known her abasement — also her name had been among those put aside — always she would hate Tahn-té,— "The other one is the man of the feast. He has danced where other men fall dead in the dance. He does not fall dead — not anything makes him dead! He holds snakes like other men hold rabbits" (She was watching warily the faces of her listeners and saw them shrink in distaste) — her own face grew keen and bright with cunning. "It is true — like this he takes the snake"— she held a wand of willow about her neck, and then held it in both hands above her head — "like this — and calls it 'brother of the sands.' He calls eagles down from the clouds to him — other birds, too"— and her eyes took on a look of fear —

"and in dark nights — no — I can not say more words! It is bad medicine to say words of witches while witches are yet alive."

"He was taught by the padres to be Christian: — yet turns back to the false gods, and — is a sorcerer?" demanded Maestro Diego. "You have your work plainly cut out for you, Eminence!" and he turned to Padre Vicente —"A leader who has been granted the light, yet seeks darkness, is but a burning brand for the pit!"

"But"— suggested the lad Chico — who spoke but rarely in the face of the company, "is there not white magic as well as the magic of the darkness? Did not the saints of the church deal openly in the white magic of their god? This pretty woman plainly has only hate — or fear — of the sorcerer. Does the dame strike any of you as being so saintly as to be above guile?"

The men laughed at that, and Don Ruy clapped him on the shoulder.

"Well reasoned, Chico — and frankly said! We will see the sorcerer at his work before we pass judgement. But the lady will love you little!"

"The less ill luck to me for that!"— retorted the lad. "Her eyes are all for Juan Gonzalvo — and for your Excellency!"

"I am sworn for my soul's sake to the troth of a silken scarf and a mad woman somewhere in Mexico," decided Don Ruy whimsically. "If I am to live a celibate,— as our good padre imposes, it is well to cheat myself with a lady love across the border,— even though she gave me no favors beyond a poet's verse and a battered head."

"A lady — beat you?" queried Chico in amaze

looking at the strong figure of Don Ruy —" and though mad, you give to her — faithfulness?"

"A faithfulness enforced, lad!" and his patron chuckled at the amaze in the eyes of the youth. "Since this crusade allows us no dames for company it is an ill one among us cannot cheat himself into the thought that a gracious doña awaits his return! It is the only protection against such sirens as this one of the loosened braids. To be sure, my goddess of Mexico — (so says the padre) — was only a mad woman — and her servants gave me a scratched skull. Yet, as I am weak and need protection, I carry the scarf of the wench, and call her a goddess and my "Doña Bradamante"— in my dreams — that does no harm to any one, and enables me to leave the ladies of the road to Gonzalvo — and the others! Oh — a dream woman is a great rest to the mind, lad,— especially is she so when she affects a wondrous perfume for her silks!"

He drew the scarf from his pocket and sniffed at it, content to make the lad laugh at the idle fancy, and while he jested thus, Padre Vicente and Gonzalvo gathered much information from Yahn Tsyn-deh. There was a feast, she told them, and all the village was merry, and the time of the visit was a good time.

From the terraces of Kah-po and Povi-whah many eyes watched the coming of the men of iron. But the women who watched were few,— all the maids and even the young wives, had started at once for the sanctuary of the ancient dwellings of the place of Old Fields. There the Woman of the Twilight was awaiting them — much corn and dried meat and beans had been stored there in the hills in waiting for

this time. If fighting was to be done, it should not be a quarrel for wives — as had happened with Coronado's soldiers in Tiguex.

But the white adventurers gave every evidence of the desire to be modest in their demands. They did not even enter the village — nor seek to do so until the place of the camp had been decided upon. Even José was not allowed to precede the others in search of kindred. He and his wife Ysobel watched the terraces, and the courage of the latter grew weak unto tears at the trials possibly behind the silent walls.

The boy Chico reassured her with jestings and occasional whisperings until the woman smiled, though her eyes were wet.

"I shall risk my own precious soul and body beside you," he stated,—"since my master Don Diego makes me a proxy while we learn if it is safe enough inside those walls for his own sacred bones. He will say the prayers for us until our faces are shown to him again!"

Then he threw himself on the green sward and laughed, and told Ysobel what a fine thing it was to be carefree of a spouse and able to kick up one's heels: —"If it had not been for love and a wedding day you would be happily planting beans in the garden of the nuns instead of following a foreign husband to his own people!"

Don Ruy sauntered near enough to hear the fillip and see the woman dry her eyes.

"Why is it, Dame Ysobel, that you allow this lad to make sport of serious things?" he asked austerely. "He is woefully light minded for so portentous an expedition."

Ysobel stammered, and glanced at the lad, and dug her toe in the soil, and was dumb.

"You overwhelm her with your high and mighty notice, Excellency," said the lad coming to her aid. "I will tell you truly — Ysobel has had patience with me since I had the height of your knee — and it is now a custom with her. She lived once in the house of my — relatives. We were both younger — and she had no dreams of wedding a wild Indian — nor I of seeking adventure among savages. She is afraid now that her husband may be blamed — or sacrificed for bringing strangers here — the story of the padre at the well of Ah-ko is not forgotten by her."

Whereupon Don Ruy told her there should be no harm to José — if he was treated without welcome by the Te-haus he should go back in safety to Mexico to follow his own will in freedom.

The woman murmured thanks and was content, and his excellency surveyed the secretary in silence a bit, until warm color crept into the face of the boy to his own confusion.

"So! — Your independence was because you had a friend at court?"— he observed. "It is fool luck that you, with your girl's mouth, and velvet cheeks, should get nearest the only woman in camp — and have a secret with her! It is high time you went to confession!"

Upon which he walked away, and left the two together, and Chico lay on the grass and laughed until called to make records of all that might occur between visiting Castilian and the Children of the Sun in their terraced village.

Then, while the men set about the preparations for a resting place, and supper Padre Vicente, with Don Ruy, Chico, Gonzalvo and the two Indians walked quietly to the gate in the great wall.

Many eyes were watching them as they were well aware, and ere they reached the gate, it opened, and the old governor Phen-tza, the war capitan and several of the older men stood there with courteous greeting of hand clasps and invitation.

For the first time since his marriage, Ka-yemo came face to face with Yahn Tsyn-deh, and quick anger flamed in his eyes as he saw her walk close to the side of Juan Gonzalvo who whispered to her — and her answer was a smile from provocative, half closed eyes.

"Yahn!"— the voice of Ka-yemo was not loud, but hard and full of angry meaning. "The other women of your clan have gone to the hills!"

"Let them go," said the girl insolently —"I do not go! For these strangers I make the talks to the old men, I am the one woman needful in the valley of Pō-sōn-gé!"

It was the hour of her triumph, and Padre Vicente looked at the two keenly. Here was a clash of two savage minds — potent for good or ill.

"To the council I will talk — I am of the people of your father — I am the nearest man — I tell you I forbid you!"

His words fell over each other in anger, and his uncle, the governor, looked at him in reproach — this was not a moment for private quarrel.

"Are you so! — the nearest?" and Yahn showed her teeth. "I do not see it so. I stand near two other men, and am well content!"

She stood between Gonzalvo and Chico, and smiled on the latter, who frankly smiled a response — at that moment Yahn was happy in her defiance. Ka-yemo need not think her forsaken! She had caught fish without a net! To the governor José

was speaking; at once there were signs of delight among the listeners. One of the old men was of his clan — other of his people were alive — and all had thought never to look on him again, it was a good day at Povi-whah!

José showed them his wife, who was greeted with joy, and all proceeded to the court of the village, where, at the house of the governor, they were given cooked corn of the feast, then rolls of bread, and stew of deer meat.

José told of his days as a slave until he was traded into the land of Padre Vicente, and of the great desire of Padre Vicente to bring him back in some lucky year to his people, and also to see with his own eyes the fine land of the Te-huas. He added also that the padre had been very kind, and that he was near to the white god of the men of iron, and strong in medicine of the spirit world.

"We already know that the medicine of the men of iron is strong medicine — and that their gods listen," said the governor.

"Also Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho makes it seen that the mountain god of this land, and the young god of the Castilian land, were maybe brothers,"— said Po-tzah watching closely the faces of the strangers. "Only your god made talking leaves — and our god gave us only the sunshine to see things for ourselves."

"Where is this man who tells you that books are made and that false gods are brothers to the true?" inquired Padre Vicente.

"It is the Po-Ahtun-ho," said José before Yahn could speak. "In Castillian he would be called Cacique. The word in Maya for that ruler is the same word as in Te-hua. It is a very old word. It

is the head of the highest order of the Spirit Things. It is what you call maybe Pope. There are many priests, and many medicine men in each village. There is only one Cacique at one time."

"Which of these men may it be?" inquired Padre Vicente. Yahn it was who answered.

"The Cacique of Povi-whah is not seen by every stranger who walks by the river," she said, and smiled scornfully. "He has come out of the mountain from the dance to the greatest of gods, and after that dance it is not easy to talk to earth people!"

"But — when people come from the far lands of a strange king —"

"That is the business of the governor and of the war capitan," stated Yahn. "He who is named Cacique in this land has not to do with strangers in the valley. His mind is with the Spirit Things. These are the heads of the village of Povi-whah — here also is the governor of Kah-po. They will listen, and learn from your words, and answer you."

"I know words," stated Ka-yemo looking at Don Ruy and the priest. "I can say words — I teach it her,"— and he motioned to Yahn, who had dwarfed them all with quick wit and glib speech. "Woman not need in council. I — captain of war can make talk."

"Is not the damsel enlisted as official interpreter for one of us?" queried Don Ruy. "I hold it best that the bond be understood lest the beauty be sent beyond reach — and some of our best men squander time on her trail! Since you, good father, have José,— I will lay claim to this Cleopatra who calls herself by another name,— a fire brand should be kept within vision. Your pardon, Eminence — and you to the head of the council in all else!"

The padre directed his conversation to Ka-yemo, while the secretary set down the claiming of Yahn as the first official act in council of His Excellency, Don Ruy de Sandoval.

At the scratching of the quill, his excellency looked over the shoulder of the lad, and read the words, and smiled with his eyes, while his lips muttered dire threats — even to discharging him from office if the records were kept in a manner detrimental.

"Detrimental to whom, my lord?" asked the lad, who saw well the restrained smile. "Your 'Doña Bradamante' of the scarf is not to set eyes on these serious pages,— and the Don Diego will certainly exact that I keep record of how near our company falls in the wake of the Capitan Coronado's — their troubles began about a wife — thus it is well to keep count of fair favorites — and this one who tells you plainly she is no wife, looks promising. Helena of Trois might have had no more charms to her discredit!"

Don Ruy said no more, for he saw that Yahn was straining her ears to catch at their meaning, and they were all losing the words of council. It appeared plain that all the chief men were quite willing that the Po-Ahtun-ho should meet the men of iron as was the padre's wish — but that no one could command it.

"Through what power is one man more supreme than others? — Yet you say you have no king!"

"No —no king. The Governor is made so each year by the men in council — only one year — then another man — the Governor gets no corn in trade for his time,— and no other thing, but honor, if he is good! Tahn-té has talked to us in council of

kings,— thus we know what a king does. We have no king."

"But while a man is the governor does he not rule all the people?"

"No — it is not so. He works for the people. He has a right hand man, and a left hand man to talk with of all things. But when it is a big thing of trouble or of need, at that time the council is called, and each man speaks, and in the end each man put a black bean or a white bean in a jar to say for him "yes" or to say for him "no." That is how the law is made in all the villages of the Pō-sōn-gé valley. There is no king!"

"We are of a surety in a new world if rulers work only for honor — and get not any of that unless they are good!" decided Don Ruy. "Make record of that novelty, Chico — our worthy Maestro Diego will find no equal of that rule in all Europe!"

"It is well for civilization that it is so!" decided Juan Gonzalvo. "Who is to advance the arts and knightly orders except there be Courts of Pontiff and of Royalty?"

"And the royalty would be a weak stomached lot if they gained not even extra corn for all their sceptre waving, and royal nods; — eh? But what of this Po-Ahtun-ho — this man who is not king — yet who is supreme?"

This query was interpreted by José, and after talk and deliberation one of the oldest men made answer.

"The Po-Ahtun is an order very ancient. When the earth was yet soft, and the rocks wet, and the first people were taught words by the mocking bird, — in that time of our Ancient Fathers, gods spoke

to men — and in that time the order of Po-Ahtun was made. It was made that men could work together on earth for spirit good. When the Mountain God, Po-se-yemo, lived as a man on the earth,— he was the chief priest of the Po-Ahtun order. Po-Ahtun means "The Ruler of Things from the Beginning." Many men belong to the Po-Ahtun, and learn the prayers, and the songs of the prayers. When the Po-Ahtun-ho walks no more on the earth — and his spirit goes on the twilight trail to Those Above, at that time the brothers of the order name the man who is to be Ruler — and he rules also until he dies.

"Then it seems your Cacique is really a king. You but call him by a different name."

"No — it is not so. Tahn-té has told the men of Povi-whah what a king is. We have no king. A king fights with knife, and with spear, and he, in his own village, punishes the one who does evil, and orders what men work on the water canal for the fields: — and what men make new a broken wall, or what men clean the court which is the property of all. The king and his men say how all these things then must be done. With the people of Povi-whah the governor does these works and orders them done, and has the man whipped if the work he does is bad work. The chief of war does work as do other men, until the Navahu and the Yutahs have to be driven away; —then it is his work to fight them — he is a warrior, but he does king work in war. These are the men who do king work. But we have no king."

"By our Lady! — 'tis a nice distinction," said Don Ruy as the old man ceased, and the men of Tehua nodded their appreciation of the old man's state-

ment. "Save your quill scratching, Chico — until you are in camp. Their eyes show little favor for the work."

The secretary obediently thrust in his pouch ink horn and quill, and clearly Don Ruy was right, for the bronze faces brightened, and their eyes regarded the young man with approval — the magic of that black water might prove potent and forbidding — never before had it been seen in council.

Padre Vicente had given a cigarro to each man, and while the ancient speaker rested, and José interpreted, all smoked the wonderful smoke from the south, and Chico took occasion to say low to Don Ruy:

"Of all this there is little to make record that is new. Tribes of Mexico have such rules of life. The legends of our people say they came ages ago out of the far North. These are maybe but the children of their brothers who the records say stopped on the way to plant corn, or to hunt, or to rest from travel."

"Records? — Where are such records?" asked Don Ruy derisively,—"in the royal archives of some mud hut?"

The eyes of Chico flashed fire for one instant; the amazed Spaniard was scarce certain of the anger in the secretary's face when it changed, and the boy shrugged his shoulders and lit a cigarro.

"It is true, Excellency, that if any Tescucan manuscripts are yet entire, it can be only because some pagan Indian his risked death and torture to hide them in mud hut or cave in the hills. The first holy archbishop of Mexico made bonfires of Indian books because the beauty of them showed plainly they were

the work of Satan. Without doubt the act earned the bishop an extra jewel for his heavenly crown!"

"Chico! If you pursue such fancies with determination you may end by being a logician and going to hell!" remarked Don Ruy. "I fear you lack a true Christian spirit, my son. But the records?"

"Only stone carved ones are still visible in the land of Anhuac," returned the boy. "The good padres say that they deal with the studies of the stars and planets, and other such speculation invented by Satanic power. When I wanted to know about them I was told that my soul was in danger of the pit."

"And that frightened you?"

"Very much, Excellency:—hence my running away."

Don Ruy was put to it to know whether or not the boy spoke truth. But his odd freaks of thought had many times the effect of an April sunlight on a day of storm. There was no way of calculating what the next moment would bring—but the unexpected was at least a diversion.

The smoking of the men was half over before Padre Vicente again asked José to state that the way of life of the Te-hua people was a thing of interest to the great king whom the Castilians served, and it would please him much to hear more of the Te-hua ruler who was Cacique.

But the old man was silent. He had talked much, he said.

"He thinks—" said Yahn with quick divination, —"that he would like to know of the strangers who are made welcome here:—and why they come far into a country not their own."

"We come because we have heard fair things of

these people," was the reply. "Our god tells us all men are brothers on the earth — we come to find new brothers."

"And if the Navahu come in the night — or the Yutah come many and strong for the corn — whose brother would your god tell you to be at that time?" asked the governor of Kah-po, a tall shrewd faced old man who had not spoken heretofore. Chico showed his teeth in a quickly suppressed smile.

"Our god would tell us," said Padre Vicente with slowness and duly impressive speech —"that our brothers must be the men who are friends with us."

"That is good," agreed the man from Kah-po, and the others said also it was good. Brothers who wore iron coats would be good brothers to have in the time of a war.

"It is as Tahn-té told us of the priests of the white god — they are wise in their thoughts," said the old man who had insisted there was no king in Povi-whah, or any Te-hua village —"all Tahn-té has told us were true words."

"He told us also," said the man from Kah-po — "that the men of iron were not friends to trust."

"They were other men of iron, not these. These men Tahn-té has not yet seen."

The Padre gave no hint that he knew enough of Te-hua words to catch the meaning of their discourse. So long as might be, he would keep that secret,— much might depend upon it.

The name Tahn-té met him at every turn — this was the mysterious Ruler — the hidden Cacique or Po-Ahtun-ho — the one chief who gave them no greeting.

"Ask for me what the name means — the name Tahn-té," he said.

José pointed to a ray of sunlight streaming through the shelter of the vine trellis.

"It means that."

"And for what cause is a man called Light of the Sun?"

José did not know, but when asked, the ancient man spoke.

"For many reasons, Those Above put the thought of the Sun in the heart of the mother of Tahn-té. Sunlight he was to Povi-whah — you shall see!"

A little boy was carrying on his head a flat basket or tray of reeds, and on it were rolls of bread, and small melons for the feast; at a few words he set down the tray, and darted around a corner — it was a day big in history for him. He was doing the work of his sister who had been sent to the hills — but for this day the work of a girl was great work — it took him so close to the men of iron that his hand could have touched one of them — if his courage had not failed!

He came back with a jar of shining black pottery, and placed it beside the old man, who thrust his hand within and drew out a handful of peaches, dried in the summer sun of a year before.

"This fruit is gathered with prayer each year from the first tree planted by the Summer People in this land," he said. To Tahn-té was given by the gods, the trees, and the seeds of the trees. Since the time when Po-se-yemo walked on earth, and brought seeds, no new seeds have been born from blossoms here in the land of Te-hua people. When the gods send a man, they also send a Sign. The sign of Tahn-té was the Flute of the Gods, the trees of this fruit, and another fruit; — also a grain of which food is made. It is a good grain. For all of this we make prayers

each year when the fruit is gathered, and when the grain is planted, and for all of this we see why the name of the Sun has been given to Tahn-té. The old men of the Hopi desert say he was born of the falling rain and the light of the moon. We do not know, but his mother knew, and she is wise — and she named him as a child of the Sky would be named."

The Castilians listened with little enough belief in the god-given Cacique. The peaches and the grain had, without doubt, been brought by Coronado. Juan Gonzalvo said as much, and Yahn told it eagerly to the council, but the old men shook their heads.

The trees were a year old from the seed when Tahn-té carried them on his back from the heart of the desert, and Capitan Coronado had not yet seen the villages of the Pō-sōn-gé, called by him the Rio Grande.

"Then: —" said Padre Vicente —"it is because he found new seeds that he is above the cares of the daily life? I can bring many strange seeds from the gardens of Europe or Africa. For that would I be a son of the moon and the stars?"

"May be so,—" said the old man,—"and maybe so the gods would not need a son on that day." He inhaled the fragrant smoke and went on to make clear to these people of outlands some little gleam of the mysteries circling holy things,—"You must be born in a good year — and a good time in that year — the trail of the visitors of the sky must be climbing up — up!"

"The trail of the visitors in the sky?" The Padre looked with quickness into the bronze faces.

"He means the planets — the wandering stars," said Chico. "The Mexican tribes also watch them

when a child is born. A god lives in each one — so they think!"

"Necromantic fancies devised by the Evil one!" stated the priest and crossed himself to ostracise such powers of the demon from the circle. The rest devoutedly imitated him, and the Te-hua men watched with interest the men of iron making their "medicine" against the celestial bodies on the descending trail.— That slight automatic gesture in unison proved even a sort of bond between them and the dusky old orator; — he could plainly see that the signs in the heavens were earnestly regarded by the white strangers. That showed they were wise to read the true things; for that he could tell them more.

"The maid who was mother to Tahn-té is named The Woman of the Twilight. When little, the spirit of her broke in two — and she went into the Land of Twilight. Her parents could not believe that she would no more walk on the earth. They went to the Po-Ahtun — they sealed her to that order — so it was, and the medicine prayer of the Po-Ahtun brought back the breath to her. But when a spirit goes to the Land of the Twilight, it does not come back at once — not all at once! The gods are strong and can do things. When they want to take her again and teach her hidden things — they take her! One Star visitor in the sky took her when she became woman, and hid her behind all the hills until her child moved,— then, in the far desert where the Sun Father is the great god, there in that place she was laid on the sands beside a well that the child be earth child like other men. That is how it was, and she knows why the earth child was called the child of the Great Star, and of the Sky."

Yahn listened eagerly — and with sulky frown — Neither she or Ka-yemo had ever before heard this account of the Woman of the Twilight and her son. The magic of it made her feel sullenly helpless. This then was the reason why no face smiled in scorn when Tahn-té would come sometimes from mesa, or cañon, bearing his mother in his arms as one would bear a little child: — all the elders knew she had been seeking the trail to the Land of Twilight where long ago she had found a god, and lost herself.

"And this woman tells to wise men a fable like this —and is given their faith?" asked Padre Vicente, while Juan Gonzalvo muttered that the savages had stolen the truth of the Mother of God, and should be made pay dear in good time, for the sacrilege!

"The mouth of the woman was sealed," stated the narrator. "But the wise men of the desert sent men to tell the Te-hua people of the magic of the woman. And the years and the work of her son made good the stories of the Hopi men."

"We have here no mere juggling pretender," remarked Padre Vicente —"a Cacique whose mother establishes family connection with the stars in the sky, could in truth have papal power among these heathen! With all their wise looks, and careful speech, these old men are not the influence we have to win for progress in this land: — this man who would place the false gods above the true God is the man to be won."

"Or to be conquered!" said Juan Gonzalvo whose wonder was that the priest had patience with their maudlin tales of village officers, or brats born

of magic and the moon,—"If I might speak — Eminence?"

"Speak — my son."

"These people have sent their women away, and have told your reverence only of their own things of pride. Of their real king they give us no sight. In the New Spain of the South these under-men would be given few presents of value, and not so much of your gracious time."

He spoke rapidly with a wary eye on the interpreters,— only José could follow the swifter speech.

"Capitan Gonzalvo gives the word of a soldier, Padre," remarked Don Ruy, "and it may be a true word. Why not give the gifts, and let us see somewhat of the feast from which we have won these dignitaries?"

Padre Vicente was agreed, and spoke a few words to José who departed with his wife for the camp. The priest gave tobacco, and while the old men smoked the new medicine, he talked to Ka-yemo of the one religion, and the one God, and that the great new god gave the command to his priests to go into the far lands and carry the light of the faith to his children who live in darkness.

Ka-yemo interpreted, and the old men nodded their heads as if to say that was all good — but it was not told for the first time, and Don Ruy could have sworn he saw the governor of Kah-po smile at another man — as one who would question whether they should be considered as children. Don Ruy did not know that one man of Kah-po had been among the two hundred human torches making the night bright at Tiguex by order of advocates of that same new and holy god.

The summers and winters since that time had not made it all forgotten in the land of the great river. To the Indian mind in general, it was plain to be seen that the strong god of the men of iron required that many victims be made sacrifice at one time. The gods of the Te-hua people asked but one sacrifice at one time, and the knife of flint was very sharp, and found quickly the heart, and the spirit self was sent quickly and with prayers over the trail of the dusk to the Light beyond the light.

Ka-yemo alone seemed enchained by the words of the priest, as he heard again the words and phrases belonging to that time of which he still dreamed in the night, and awoke startled and alert.

Yahn watched him with a little frown. She did not know that the strongest power ever impressed on his boyish mind, had been the power of the white conquerors. He had through the years grown away from its influence, but at sight of the robe, and the cord, and the shiny black beads, it all came back. He felt the honor of the fact that the priest of that strong god was looking at, and talking only to him: — Ka-yemo!

His pride made his eyes kindle and he was very handsome. Don Ruy wondered why Yahn, his own official interpreter, looked at him sideways with disapproval.

José returned with his hands full of the gifts for which he had been sent. There was one for each of the men in the group, and the people of the village pressed close around the door to see them given away.

Then Padre Vicente stood up and offered to the governor of Povi-whah a rosary like his own, but of brown beads.

"They tell me that to you requests are made as prayers are made, and that from you they are given again to the Cacique for decision. We present our request and our gift. Tell him the gift is one kings have been graciously pleased to wear, and that our request is that he meet us at an early hour, that we may speak in kindness of many things."

"Tahn-té — you call Cacique — is not yet speaking with people out of his order," said Phen-tza, the governor. "But this can go, and the message can go, and on another day Tahn-té may ask you to go in his door."

Then there were clasping of hands, and friendly smiles and the visitors were free to go or wander about the village, and watch the greetings of José and the comrades of his boyhood. His wife Ysobel was caressed and admired by the ancient women of the tribe, and a garland of flowers placed on her head. At sun rise in the morning she was to present herself at the door of her new relatives for the baptism of adoption, and then she would be given also a Te-hua name.

Padre Vicente and the Castilians were offered an empty abode outside the wall. Despite the scowls of the Ka-yemo Yahn delighted to linger close as might be to Juan Gonzalvo while they all walked to inspect it. Then the Castilian camp with its wondrous animals was to be visited by the governor and other Te-hua men, and great good feeling prevailed. The wise ecclesiastical head of the cavalcade had asked nothing but gracious thoughts, and the gifts he brought had been good gifts.

Don Ruy with the secretary, let who might judge of the new camp, while he wandered in some surprise past the door ways decked with feast day garlands —

and above certain ones were pendent bits of turquoise as if for ceremonial marking of some order or some clan, and instead of the blanket or arras there were long reeds strung, and at the end of each string a beaten twist of copper twinkling like bells when stirred by any one entering or leaving the dwelling.

The dwelling of the dove cotes had a tiny inside verandah, and one of the curious robes woven of twisted rabbit skins was laid over a beam. Great meal jars stood along the wall, and beside them were four melons, four full grained heads of the bearded wheat, also four peaches and four pears. They were arranged on a great tray of woven reeds, and placed without the doorway to the right. The careful arrangement gave all significance of an offering of the first fruits on an alter. All the other homes had feasting and laughter and the sound of gaity and much life; at every other door many smiling faces of old women and children met them, and the rolls of feast bread were offered, or bowls of cooked corn. But here all was silence, only the doves fluttering above gave life to the place. The reeds at the entrance hung straight and still. This entrance faced the south, but there was another towards the east and the river. The mysterious island of stone called the Mesa of the Hearts, loomed dark across the water and a beaten path led from that east door to the water's edge. Don Ruy could see from the bank that a canoe was there made from a log hollowed by careful burnings.

The silent corner where the doves fluttered, held his attention and he returned to it. Chico it was who stepped close to the rabbit skin robe, and saw beside the melons, the ears of wheat, and the yet green, unripe fruit of the pears and the peaches.

The dried peaches in the jar shown them by the old Te-hua man had not given either of them a second thought, but the two fruits grown from trees, and the bearded wheat of the Mediterranean arranged in the basket with the care given a sacred offering, was a different matter. Don Ruy noted the staring eyes and parted lips of the boy, and silently stepped nearer at a gesture.

Then they stared in each others eyes as men who look on death unexpected, or witchcraft — or some of the experiences of this life for which there are no words, and Don Ruy laid his hand on the shoulder of the lad, and drew him in silence out of the shadow of the roofed entrance.

"It is good to be where the bright sun shows things as they are," he decided. "The shadows and silence of that place tied the tongue. How feel you now, Lad, as to the story of Don Teo the Greek and the seeds that were given to the maid as sacred medicine?"

"But — the man died — so says the padre — and the woman —"

Then they fell silent and each was thinking back over the trails of the desert, and their company of thirty men — and the care needed to find the way alive with all the help of provisions and of beasts.

"The woman had a greater journey and a more troublous one,"— said Don Ruy. "These are clearly the fruits of Spanish gardens, but in some other way have they reached this land. It was made plain that the place of the palms where he left her was unknown leagues towards the western sea, and that the maid could only die in the desert."

"He crossed this river in his travels before he saw the Indian maid of medicine charms," reminded

the secretary. "Do you not recall the journeys with the war people? He may have bestowed upon others the seeds of other lands."

Don Ruy drew a long breath, and then laughed.

"By our Lady! — You bring joy with that thought!" he said heartily.— "I made sure the Devil was alive and was working ahead on our trail when my eyes were startled by the offering of fruit and grain! You looked as if it might be your own hair was rising to stand alone! We are but children in the dark, Chico, and there come times when we have fear. But your thought is the right thought, lad. Of a certainty he crossed this country; that there is no record is not so strange a thing — he was only another brown savage among many!"

They spoke together of the strangeness of their findings in the village — and its exceeding good arrangement with ladders to draw above in case of attack, and only one house — that of the doves and the fruit — into which one could walk from the court. All the others were as in the other villages — terraces, and the first terrace had doors only in the roof so that a blank adobe wall faced the court and the curious. Each great house with rooms by the score, and its height from two to five stories, was the home of many, and a fort in case of need.

While they commented on these things, two men came running swiftly through the gate from the Castilian camp. One was José, and it was Po-tzah who ran beside him. They went straight to the house of the dove cote, and José waited without while, after a few eager hurried words, the other slipped behind the twinkling arras of river reeds and shells.

"What now?" asked Don Ruy coming up, and José showed fear at first and then spoke.

"It is your own horse to which it has happened, Excellency," he said. "The padre say it is not the fault of any one, for the bush is high there, and who could see through them? But it is the snake — the one you say has the castanets in the tail, and it has put the poison in the foot of your horse!"

Don Ruy swore an oath that was half a prayer, and the pert secretary did the first thing that was familiar since he was seen with the company — he laid his hand on Don Ruy's shoulder and felt that the horse lost was as a brother lost, and Chico had a fancy of his own to caress it, and even burnish the silver of his bridle.

"And — why come you here to this house?"

"Here is the one man who knows the ways of the snake — if he is not in prayer they think he may come — but not any man can know what the Po-'Ahtun-ho may do — and the horse beautiful may die on our first day in Povi-whah!"

But the reeds with their copper and shell tassels tinkled, and Don Ruy looked to see the old medicine man of spells and charms come forth.

He saw a man young as himself and more tall. 'Almost naked he was, with only the white banda in which was a blue bird's feather — the girdle and moccasins. One glance he gave Don Ruy and his companion, bent his head ever so little in acknowledgement of their presence, and then ran beside his friend Po-tzah with the easy stride of the trained runner. Whatever his knowledge of the snake might be, he waited for no words, but moved quickly.

Many men were about the animal and Don

Diego had bound tightly a cord of rawhide about the knee, and water was being poured on the foot. But Te-hua and Castillian alike stood aside as the swift nude figure came among them — and without word or question went straight to the hurt animal.

The other natives had approached the four-footed creatures with a certain curiosity — if not awe, and there had been more than a little scattering of prayer meal when the mules were hobbled. The braying of one of them had caused terror in the hearts of the older men.

But this man took no heed of the groups of men or of animals. He led the injured steed out of the pool of water, and with a knife of the black flint cut the bandage — to the extreme distaste of Don Diego, who had been chief surgeon.

Then, still without words to the people, he did a strange thing, for he knelt there on the ground and leaned his shoulder against the leg of the horse, and slipped slowly, slowly down until his cheek touched the pastern, and his strong slender hands slid downward again and again over the leg of the animal while his lips moved as though in whispered speech to the ground itself.

No man spoke for a long time, but some of the elder men cast prayer meal that it fell on the kneeling savage and on the horse, and the animal reached down and rubbed its nose on his shoulder as if he had been its well known and long beloved master.

Curious were all the Castilians, but Juan Gonzalvo, who had spent time in speech with Yahn Tsyn-deh, was more than curious. Like a tiger cat above its prey he stood frowning at the silent "medicine" of the naked worker in devilish arts.

Then the kneeling man arose and spoke in Castillian.

"It is good," he said. "It is done," but he did not lift his eyes from the ground. The task of some prayer was yet unfinished — and he turned again towards his home and walked swiftly and the horse followed him until Juan Gonzalvo caught it and gave careful heed to the stricken foot, and could see no sign where the swelling should be.

"It is big medicine," said the Te-hua men. "Now our brothers, the strangers have seen that our god is strong and our men to work are strong."

"It is sorcery of the devil," said Juan Gonzalvo. "Some medicine he had in his hands — some medicine we could not see. No physician in all Europe has skill to cure by such magic. Is it like that a naked savage should know more than the learned professors?"

"No: — it is not to be believed," assented Don Ruy —"but thanks to the Saints it is true for all that! — and that silent youth is after all Tahn-té the Cacique!"

"No —" said Padre Vicente with decision —"the sooner that office is no longer his the sooner do we arrive at that which brought us here. That is Tahn-té the worker in accursed red magic — Tahn-té the sorcerer!"

CHAPTER XIII

A PAGAN PRIEST IN COUNCIL

LITTLE else was spoken of in the camp of the Castilians, but the witchcraft of the noble steed. The more pious picketed their own animals at a respectful distance from the one healed by sorcery.

Don Diego took the healing as a sign that the Evil One walked openly between the rows of the adobe dwellings, and that the field camp was a safer haven than a house whose every corner was, without doubt, a matter of unsanctified prayer in the building.

Others there were who had grown weary of drenchings of summer rains, and Yahn, hearing their arguments, warned them that old Khen-yah the rain priest was making medicine for more corn rains — they could easily hear his tombé if they but hearkened.

"That we can easily do without any strain to our ears," agreed Don Ruy —"but what of that? Is a piece of hide tied around a hollow log to serve as thunder from which the rain must come, whether or no?"

The girl did not grasp his raillery and liked it little. When Don Ruy spoke to her — or spoke of her, she felt she was being laughed at. Only her determination to be in some way a power through these strange people, kept her from betraying her anger.

"The rain comes," she stated coldly. "The drum of Khen-yah never rests in quiet until it does

come. One night and one day he has made medicine — soon it must come."

"Then I cast my vote for the cover of a solid roof, gentlemen," decided Don Ruy. "I've had one taste of their red magic — it was speedy and effectual. If the old magician should decide to send us a flood, the sorcery would not be so much to my liking."

After some further discourse all agreed to accept the offered dwelling, though Don Diego warned Don Ruy it was unwise to speak in so light a manner of the power of the Evil One when it was rampant in the land. Already he had taken up the valiant battle for converts. His success was gratifying in that one woman had without understanding, yet with pleasurable smiles listened to the credo, and had accepted with equal gratification a string of blue beads of glass, and a rosary.— It was Säh-pah. She had found courage to slip alone into the camp while Yahn talked in the village. After the little matter of the beads she at once became as a shadow to Don Diego, who had great confidence of leading her away from her false gods. When he stated his pious hope to the official interpreter of Don Ruy, that damsel seemed little gifted with the devout apprehension or sisterly affection so much to be desired in females. She was angry because of the blue beads, and later, when the sulkiness had departed enough that her tongue found again its right usage, she stated that the pious Don Diego would find little trouble in leading Säh-pah to any place he chose — nor would any other man who wanted a convert!

Whereupon the eager and pious gentleman gave thanks — let the others discuss civil or ecclesiastical rule among the savage people — or even risk their souls in dealings with sorcerers, but he had made the

only convert on this first day, and thus it was recorded by the secretary on the first page of the " Relaciones " pertaining to the chapters of Povi-whah, in that part of the " Province of New Spain in the Indian Island which is refreshed by the majestical stream called in the savage language Pō-sōn-gé, but the same called by the Castilians the Rio Bravo and the Rio Grande del Norte."

Yahn Tsyn-deh took with all seriousness her office as an adjunct of the Castilian camp, and Ka-yemo who also gave help in the tradings for corn, and for wood, and the various needs of the camp, found her there always except when she slept, and he went back and forth like a tethered beast, and dared not command her. He had not thought about her except to laugh in anger ever since a dawn when he had walked out of her dwelling because of her witch's temper and her tongue of a fiend: — and that day he had gone straight as the ravens fly, to the house of his oldest relative, and told him he wished to be married as early as might be to Koh-pé, the daughter of Tsa-fah. Then to the wilderness he had gone hunting, leaving all of trouble behind him while the two clans made the marriage.— When he came back again to his people all was decided — and he laughed loud in the face of Yahn — and passed her by, and carried fresh killed rabbits to the door of Koh-pé.

That was how it had ended between them. Not once afterwards had he spoken to her until he met her as she walked triumphant and very proud beside the Castilians at the gateway. Triumphant and very proud did she continue to walk, and insolent were her eyes when she let them rest on the husband of Koh-pé. In vain he talked to the governor that she might be

banished with the other women who were young. Ka-yemo found himself laughed at by the Te-hua men; — was he angry because the Castilian capitan of war could give the girl beads of red shell and bracelets of white metal — while he — Ka-yemo — had not given her even meat from the hunt all those summers and winters when she had been his love?

So the men laughed — and told him each new gift given to the one woman who knew Castillian words — and he laughed also as one does who cares little, but in his heart was growing rage such as he had never known could be in him. The man who was sentinel of Povi-whah while the stars shone was visited in the night by Ka-yemo the chief of war, and the governor Phen-tsa was well pleased when he heard it. To be married had, he thought, made a stronger man of Ka-yemo, for never before had he watched with the sentinel through the night, except the nights of the young moon when it was part of his work to watch, and to make reports of the things in the sky to the Po-Ahtun-ho.

And no one guessed that while his visit to the sentinel on the highest terrace had been brief — his walks past the dwelling of Yahn Tsyn-deh had been many, and first and last had he halted and lay flat on the roof and put his soul into his ears to know that she slept soundly, and — alone!

Then, angry in his heart with everybody — he went to the kiva of his clan where all the boys and the men slept — and the sun was high and even the youngest boy had gone out to eat before he wakened and looked on the world. When he did so he found that many visitors were abroad. From Po-ho-gé — and Oj-ke — and Na-im-be and even far Ui-la-ua were

men sent by council as if to a feast. The presence of all these men meant that they burned to know why the men of iron had come to the North.

They all spoke first with the governor, as was courtesy, and then on his good report of their good intent — they all approached the door of the Castilians, where smiles and greetings were exchanged, and those who breathed on the hand of the adventurers were asked also to kiss the silver figure on the cross of the padre, which they did with all courtesy since their hosts required it, and then with smoke to the pagan gods of the four ways, they all entered into converse of great intent, though the meanings at times were not so clearly understood each by the other, for all the help of José and of Yahn.

To tell an Indian that the Sacred Four Ways means not anything to the greatest of all gods, is a thing of confusion, more especially so when told that a sacred three is the real combination by which entrance to the paradise of an after life is made beyond all question a thing of certainty.

To the adventurer of the 16th century dire mishaps were to be expected if the Faith was not thus clearly borne, and set plainly before the heathen. Let him reject it if he choose, and die the absolute death of body and soul for such rejection,— let the search for gold or jewel be postponed as may be, bu the first duty under authority civil or ecclesiastic must be the duty to the faith in the One God and Him crucified: — it opened the portal in a god-fearing, orthodox manner to any traffic deemed of advantage to the adventurers who bore the faith, and the cross; — on the hilts of swords!

The visitors listened with ceremonial courtesy to the words of the padre — and heard of the glories

of the great Castilian king, the chosen of God — the pure and undefiled, and, of the still greater monarch above the skies, served by this king and by all righteous people to all ends of the earth.

In reply to which godly disquisition, the spokesman of Na-im-be and Te-tzo-ge invited the followers of the True God to a feast where only strong men could come. The women of the dance in that feast were strong and were young. Four days would the dance and the feast last. The padre who spoke for the high god could choose which of his men could enter the dance for that time.

The padre heard without special wonder, he had known many primitive people; but Don Diego was lost in amaze as the details were spelled clearly for his understanding.

"It is worship of Pan driven out of Greek temples to find lodging in this wilderness!" and he crossed himself with persistence and energy, and marvelled at the quiet of Padre Vicente. Or, "it is the ancient devils of Babylon to which these heathen give worship — Saint Dominec hear them! They would instruct their very gods in creation! — Blasphemy most damnable! — Blasphemy against the Ghost!"

Whereupon he went in search of his secretary to make record of the abomination, and found that youth witnessing the pagan baptism by which Ysobel was made a daughter of her husband's clan — each way he turned he found primitive rites bewildering and endless! All work done was done in prayer to their false gods. From the blessing of the seed corn laid away in the husk, until the time when it was put in the earth,— and the first ear ready for the roasting fire — at each and every stage he was told of special

ceremonies required,— and as with the corn, so with the human plant — at each distinctive stage in the growth of a man or woman child, open ceremonial thanks was given to their deities whose names were too depraved for any Christian man to remember.

Where the pious Señor Brancedori had expected a virgin field for a wondrous mission, he found an ancient province with ceremonies complicated as any of ancient Hebrew or Greek tradition. Each little toddler of the clan put forth a baby hand to touch the head of Ysobel in sign of welcome, and one woman came whose brow was marked with piñon gum — and he was told that the sign was that of maternity; — all who were to be mothers must wear a prayer symbol to the Maiden Mother of the god who was born of a dream in the shadow of the piñon tree!

"Do I myself dream while wide awake, or do I hear this thing?" he demanded of José, in sore distress to divide the false from the true, and impress the last on those well satisfied minds. "Is it miracles as well as sorcery their misled magicians make jugglery of? When did this thing happen of which the shameless wenches parade the symbol?"

Yahn asked of an aged Te-hua man the question, and the man squatted in the sun and began ceremoniously:

"*Han-na-di Set-en-dah-nh!* It was in the ancient day when the people yet abode in the cliff dwellings of the high land. It was the time of the year when the stars danced for the snow, and as the time of the Maid-Mother came close, the sun hid his face a little more each day, and the longest night of all the nights in the year was the time of that birth of the god Po-se-yemo. The sun went away on the south trail and would not look on the earth until the god-child

was born, for the Maid-Mother was much troubled, and the sun was sad because of her trouble. That is how it was, and each year the people remember that time, and make ready for the twilight trail if the god in the sun should not come again from the south,— but each time the sun god listens to the prayers and comes back and all are very glad. *Hanna-di Set-en-dah-nh!*"

Maestro Diego seated himself in a disconsolate mood at this artifice of Satan thus to engraft heathen rubbish on the childish minds of the natives: — for that they did lean on that faith the mark of the piñon symbol was a witness before his eyes! It was a thing to dishearten even a true believer, and he feared much that Padre Vicente passed over many signs of the devil worship each hour — not realizing that it must be dug out, root and branch, ere the planting of the cross would mean aught but the Ways of the Four Winds to these brown builders of stone and mortar, and weavers of many clothes!

Juan Gonzalvo found him there disconsolate.

"Not any wondrous thing of the Blessed Twelve can you recite to the animals and win even a surprise," he lamented to this pious comrade in the cause.—"To tell them that the eye of their creator watches them from the skies is to bring only a retort that the great god has as many eyes as the stars — and sees through all of them at once! Their deceitful visions are such that even the miracles make naught of wonder in their darkened souls. They are not of doubting minds like to Thomas the tardy! — they accept all the records of the Faith as they would accept a good dinner — and then tell you that the fair victuals in the pot had been cooked by themselves time out of mind in a different, and more seasonable way! Everything

but Satan himself do they believe, him they deny previous acquaintance with until told by me of his reality! — but in secret there is not any doubt that they do give him worship since he of course inspires their devilish heresies. Padre Vicente has the work of a saint facing him in this place, since only a miracle can make them Christian men!"

Gonzalvo was of the opinion that the good padre was disturbed over temporal things requiring prayer and thought. Between their visitors of the morning, discourse had been made of the fruitless quest of Capitan Coronado for the smile of the sun which became yellow metal in the earth. It was secret speech, for neither of the interpreters had disclosed it. The quick ear of Padre Vicente had caught the meaning. Also the visitors from other villages were plainly here to see what action the Po-Ahtun-ho of Povi-whah was to take, and there were some who deemed him too youthful to be a leader — which the padre gave agreement to. Also it was clear to his reverence that the youthful magician was the guardian of the gold, and must in some way be bought or mastered.

While they talked, and weighed as might be the complications to be met, a messenger from the governor came to them, and touched them with a slender wand of office that they follow him. As they did so, José came to them, and said that at last it was plain the Cacique meant to see both red and white visitors in the kiva of the Po-Ahtun. No secret things could be spoken to him,— all must hear the talk with the strangers! José was to go, and Ka-yemo the war chief, every one who knew both Te-hua and Castilian words — every one was to go but the damsel Yahn Tsyn-deh.

The governor and the Ka-yemo appeared dressed

in their most gorgeous robes of fur, feathers, and painted skins. Also Ka-yemo wore much of the wealth of his wife in shell beads about his neck.

Taking a timely hint, Don Ruy appeared in unusual magnificence. He carried the standard of Spain and walked beside the padre who bore the cross. Behind them came Chico the secretary bearing the embroidered vest and cap of Don Diego with which they made him grand when they discovered him on the way.

Half the Castilians marched in order in the rear and formed for guard at a respectful distance under Capitan Gonzalvo. Seeing that all was well, he mounted the steps to the roof, and was the last to descend into the sanctuary.

One Te-hua sentinel stood on guard for his people at the place of council, and the serene life of the village went on as if no mail clad men were within its walls, only the children who were small, and the boys who were curious, loitered close and wondered of what the men of the beards wove their armor, for the water bottles woven of reeds and plastered with gum of the piñon had that same glazed surface. Strange things must grow where these men grew!

In the circle of the council home it was an impressive line of men who faced each other in silence. Chico half in earnest, announced in a whisper to Don Ruy that the ladder of the entrance would be his choice of a seat; — so as to be nearest the outside world in case of trouble.

Shadowy it was in the great room where only the way of the sky gave light, and the only seat was that built around the wall — and to Don Ruy was like to pictures of the old Roman ruins. The walls were white, and there were lines and strange symbols in

pale green, and in yellow: — the colors of the Summer People. An altar of stone was directly under the ladder, and the light from above fell on the terraced back of it — typifying the world of valley, and mesa, and highest level. A ceremonial bowl of red ware echoed this form on its four terraced sides. It held white and yellow pollen, and the sacred corn of four colors formed a cross with the bowl as a center; — all this was placed before the statue of a seated god carved from red stone. The arms were folded and the pose was serene — waiting! But as fragrant bark was tossed on the sacred fire below him,— and a flame awoke for a moment, the eyes reflected the light in a startling way — as though alive! Then the strangers saw that the eyes were of iridescent shell set in the carven stone,— and more strange than all was the fact that the god of the altar was a weeping god, and the tear under each eye was also of the strange shell mosaic. It was the Earth-Born God who had been driven out by the proud hearts of the Lost Others. Weeping, he waited the Sign in the Sky by which he was to return. His name meant Dew of Heaven — and the Dew and the Sun must work together for the best life of growing things, and of human things.

Among all the swart elderly faces it was an easy matter to pick the man who had given back to him the steed. The eyes of Don Ruy sought him eagerly, and more than ever wondered at the youth of him, and the countenance fairer than many a Castilian of their land. The other glimpses of him had been brief, and when kneeling by the horse, his face had been all but hidden.

He wore no ceremonial festive garb as did the others. The white robe of deerskin was folded about

him, and he gave no heed to the different visitors who entered. His eyes were on the floor as though in meditation, and in silence he accepted the sacred smoke, and then glanced towards the place where the governor sat always when in council. After that one little look there was no longer silence. The padre, watching the impassive young face, observed that one glance was all that was required of command. And the governor of Povi-whah arose and spoke.

He told to the brothers and neighbors of the coming, and the kindly coming, of the Castilians to bring back in safety one Te-hua man who had been carried far south as a slave. The man of the grey robe was the priest of the Castilian god, and that god had sent him to say that all men must be brothers, with the god in the sky for a father. These new brothers brought good gifts and tokens from their king. The king said his children would also help fight the wild Apache and Navahu and Yutah in the day when they came to kill and take captives.

Smiles went over many faces in the circle. Nods of approval gave good hope for the Castilian cause.

Then the governor of Kah-po arose.

This coming of the strange brothers was good, he agreed. It was much for nothing. How many fields for corn would the Castilian brothers ask for such help in battle?

The padre lifted the cross, and stood up, and the Castilians knelt on the stone floor with heads low bowed.

" Of fields of mortal man we ask no more than the corn we eat —" he said —" but the great god decreed that each soul for salvation must be written by the priest in the great record. Baptism must they accept,— and new prayers to the true god must they

learn. Out of the far land had the true god made the trail that the faith be carried to the Te-hua people. Under the cross he wished to give the sacrament of baptism.

The kneeling Castilians impressed the pagan men more than might have been hoped. They were strong — yet they were as bidden children under that Symbol. It was big medicine! Ka-yemo found his own head bowed lower and lower — the spell of the older days was working! — when he lifted his eyes, it was to see the brief glance of Tahn-té rest on him. He sat erect again as though a spoken command was in that look. All this saw Don Ruy, and all this saw the padre, and his teeth locked close under his beard.

Many were the exchange of thought over faiths old and faiths new in the land, also of the ancient republics, the Pueblos, and the interest of the majestic ruler who was king of Spain and the Indies was made manifest by his subjects. Of many things did they speak until all the old men had spoken, and it was plain to be seen that the Castilians were not unwelcome. The winning courtesy of Don Ruy made many friends, and the wise brain of the padre made no mistakes. Yet of the one central cause of the quest not any one had spoken, and the silent Cacique had only designated by a glance or a motion of the hand who was to be the next spokesman. He was the youngest of all, and he waited to listen.

Then, when the smoke had been long, and silence had been long, Tahn-té the wearer of the white robe arose. For a space he stood with folded arms wrapped in the mantle of high office, and quietly let his gaze rest on one after another of those in the circle, halting last at Ka-yemo whose glance fell under his own — and whose head bent as under accusation.

TAHN-TÉ STEPPED FORWARD

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Tahn-té smiled, but it was not a glad smile — he had seen that the old magic of the gray robe was holding the war chief in thrall to the strangers.

Then Tahn-té stepped forward from the seat of council — and threw aside the white robe, and slender and nude as the Indian gods are nude but for the girdle, and the medicine pouch, he stood erect, looking for the first time direct and steadily into the eyes of Padre Vicente. The circle of the council room might have been an arena and only those two facing each other and measuring each other.

While one might count ten he stood thus silent, and Don Ruy could hear his own heart beat, and Chico clutched at the embroidered doublet of Don Diego, and wished for the sound of any man's voice.

Then Tahn-té smiled as the eyes of Padre Vicente wavered, as Ka-yemo's had wavered — the boy who had tamed serpents felt the strength of the hills with him. Always he felt strong when he stood alone!

From the medicine pouch he took the gift of the rosary, and held it aloft that all might see, and the silver Christ on it caught the light from the opening in the roof, and swung and circled like a thing alive.

"Señores"— he said in Spanish though slowly, as one little used to the speech —"one of those among you has done me the honor to send me a gift and a message. I was making prayers at that time, — I have not been free to return thanks until now in the council. I do so, and I speak in Spain's words as this is not a Te-hua matter. It is a gift from a Christian to a Pagan, and the message told me a king would be proud to wear this strand of carven beads. Señores: — I am no king, kings give royal bounties to each giver of a gift. I stand naked that you see with your own eyes how little I can accept,— since

in return I can give not anything! Take back your kingly gift, Señor Priest: — I cannot exchange for it even — a soul! "

He stepped lightly as a panther of the hills across the open space and let fall the beads into the hands of Padre Vicente.

" That you may save it for the king, Señor! " he said gently, and bowing with more of grace than a courtier who does homage, he returned to his place.

Padre Vicente turned gray white under the tan. Don Diego crossed himself and muttered a prayer. Juan Gonzalvo uttered an expletive and half smothered it in a gasp as the face of Tahn-té caught the light for one instant.

" Blood of Christ! " — he whispered — " look at his eyes — his eyes! "

Don Ruy caught the arm of the man and pressed it for warning to silence. When he turned a more composed face to the circle, the secretary was looking at him and there was something like terror in the face of the lad. Each knew the thought of the other — each remembered the words of Juan Gonzalvo at Ah-ko,— also the basket of the sacred first fruit at the portal under the dove cote — also the blue eyes of the Greek — blue with lashes so long and so heavy that black might be their color. The pagan priest would need all the help of his gods if Juan Gonzalvo caught this thought of theirs!

Padre Vicente recovered himself, kissed the crucifix and slipped it within his robe.

" The words of this man are the words Satan is clever in coining when the false gods speak and reject the true," he stated quietly. " My children, we must not hold this against the weak human brother. The devils of necromancy and sorcery are stubborn — but

ere this the stubbornness has been broken, and the saints have rejoiced! It is plain that devilish arts could not prosper where the Image remained — hence it has been given back! Make no mistake my children, where the word of God, and the Image rest,— there the pagan powers must ever grow weak. Thanks be that this is so! Remember it — all of you when you pray!"

Don Diego started his prayers at once, while Juan Gonzalvo leaned forward and stared at the pagan sorcerer like a hound held in leash.

The Te-hua men had heard only gentle tones from Tahn-té and thought little of the strange change in the faces of the Castilians.— Tahn-té many times said surprising things — that was all!

But Tahn-té, listening closely to the priestly admonition as Padre Vicente grasped all the meaning of it. He was being branded as a worker of evil magic — a *sorcerer* — the most difficult accusation of all to fight down in an Indian mind!

He looked from face to face of the strangers — halted at the secretary, but seeing there either fear or sympathy — his eyes sought further, and rested on Don Ruy.

Then he drew from his medicine pouch a second rosary, a beautifully wrought thing of ebony and gold.

"Señor" he said,—"if I mistake not, it was your animal I helped but yesterday. Is it not so?"

"It was in truth — and much am I in your debt for that help!" said Ruy Sandoval with heartiness — "it is no fault of mine that I am late in rendering thanks. You deny that you are king — yet I have known majesty easier to approach!"

"And the animal is now well, and shows no marks of the Christian's Satan?"

"Sound: — every inch of him!"

"Thanks that you say so, and that you do not fear to say so," said Tahn-té. "Since it is so, it makes clear that the printed word, or the graven image is no weight to True Magic, even when taught us by pagan gods! For ten years I have read, day time and night time, all there is to read in the books of your church left by Padre Luis — also all the other books left by the men of Señor Coronado's company, and by Padre Juan Padilla who died at Ci-bo-la. Side by side I have studied the wisdom of these books, and the wisdom of our ancient people of the Te-hua, as told to me by the old men. One has never held me from seeing clear that which I read in the other, and the graven image has only the Meaning and the Power which each man gives to it! It was with me when I took away the sting of the Brother Snake. Padre Luis was a man who would have been a good man in any religion — that is why I kept this symbol of him — not for the crucified god on it! But for the sake of the god, is it sacred to you because your heart tells you to think that way. It is right to be what a man's heart tells him to be. I give you the prayer beads. I give it to you because your horse helped me to show your people that the pagan gods are strong, if the heart of the man is strong!"

In the "Relaciones" Don Diego wrote that — "The horrification of that moment was a time men might live through but could not write of.— For myself I know well that only the invisible army of the angels kept the beams of the roof from crushing us, as well as the poor pagans, who sat themselves still in a circle with pleasant countenances!"

Ruy Sandoval knew courage of any kind when he

saw it, and he met Tahn-té mid-way of the council and accepted the rosary of beauty from his hand.

"My thanks to you, Señor Cacique," he said — "the more so for the care given this relic. The Fray Luis de Escalona was known of my mother — also was known the lady from whom this went to his hand. A goldsmith of note fashioned it, and its history began in a palace; — strange that its end should be found here in the desert of the Indies."

"The end has perhaps not yet been found, Señor," — said the Indian,—"thanks that you accept it."

Then he spoke in Te-hua to the people as if every personal incident with the Castilians was forever closed.

"You have listened to fair words from these men — and to sweet words of brother and brother. I have waited until all of you spoke that I might know your hearts. You are proud that they come over all the deserts and seek you for friends. Have you asked them why it is so?"

No one had asked why all the other tribes were left behind, and why the strangers had come to camp at the Rio Grande del Norte.

"We are good people," stated one man, and the others thought that was so, and a fair enough reason.

Tahn-té listened, and then spoke to the Castilians.

"You have come far, Señores, and my people have not yet heard the true reason of the honor you pay them. The priest always goes — and the tale told is that it is for souls — (Father Luis truly did believe it was for souls!) But your books tell plainly one thing, and the Christian men I knew taught by their lives the same thing, and it was this: — For gold, for precious stones,— or for women — are the real

things which your kings send out companies of men in search of. Women you could find without crossing the desert. This Te-hua man who was first captive, and then slave, would have come in gladness to his people if let go free, yet for five summers and winters did the Castilian priest hold him servant and at last comes with him to his home. Is this because of love? His reverence, the padre, is wise in much with men, — but great love is not his; I cannot see him starving in a cave, and blessing his tormentors as did Fray Luis. So, Señores, the reason must be made more clear. Señor Coronado sought gold — and full freedom was given him to find gold — if he could! Why is your desire to fight for us against the Apache and the Yutah — and what is the thing you ask in exchange? Not yet have we had any plain word as from your king."

Don Ruy smiled at his logic. Here was no untutored savage such as they had hoped to buy with glass beads — or perhaps a mule the worse for the journey! However it ended, he was getting more of adventure than if he had built a ship to sail the coasts!

"Games have been won by Truth ere now even though Truth be not popular," he said to the padre.

"It is not fitting that his Reverence should make reply,"— put in Don Diego with much anger. "Holy Church is insulted in his person. If this were but Madrid —"

"To wish for Paradise takes no more of breath," — suggested Don Ruy, "and if it is beneath the dignity of any else, perhaps I could speak — or Chico here."

But the latter silently disclaimed gift of logic or oratory,— in fact the turn of things was not toward

gaity. Don Diego was shocked at everything said. Gonzalvo and the padre were plainly furious, yet bound to silence. Only Don Ruy could still smile. To him it was a game good as a bull fight — and much more novel.

"I shall speak, though it be a task I elsewhere evade," he said, and looked at the Cacique — a solitary nude bronze body amidst all the gay trappings of the assembly. "Senor, it is not women we seek — though a few of us might make room for a pretty one! It is true that the men in armor would help guard your fields, for they have heard that you are the Children of the Sun as were certain people of the south. In the south the sun sent a sign to his children — it was gold set in the ledges of the rock, or the gravel of the stream. If these people of the Rio Grande del Norte can show these signs that they be given as proof to our king — then men in armor of steel will come many as bees on the blossom and guard your land that your corn and your women be ever safe from the wild Indians who make devastation."

Tahn-té repeated this to the Te-hua men without comment of his own, and the dark faces were watched by the Castilians. They could see no eagerness — only a little wonder — and from some a shrug or smile,— but — not from any of them anger or fierce looks!

The padre drew a quiet breath of content and leaned back — the game was at least even. The Navahu had been bad for two years — very bad! The appeal of Don Ruy might prove the right thing, and the simple thing. It would take time, for the Indian mind was slow; — the quickness of the naked sorcerer proved nothing otherwise, for every god-

fearing man could see that he was more than mortal in satanic strength. Against this one man alone must the battle for the Trinity be fought!

Together did the Te-hua men of council speak much — and to Ka-yemo they turned more than once and asked of the Tiguex days of the other Christian men. But between the devil of the padre and his symbols and the deep sea of the eyes of Tahn-té, not much was to be remembered by a man, and he could only say that his stay in the south was not long — that he was only a boy, and without the understanding of things done and seen.

"I have spoken,"— said Tahn-té when the older men turned to him for council as to the wisdom of throwing away so powerful a friend as the men of iron. Some were concerned lest they should turn away and offer help to their enemies!

In the land of the Yutah the yellow stones were found in the stream — also in the heart of the Navahu desert. No people used these stones because they were sacred to the sun, and strong for prayer, but — it was well to think what would happen if the men of iron were brothers to the Navahu!

"Never more could we sleep under our own roof — or plant corn in our own fields," said the man from Te-tzo-ge,—"our daughters would be wives to the Navahu and mothers of Navahu, and the grass would grow over the walls we have builded."

They smoked in silence over this thought, for it was a dark thought — and it could come true!

"We could kill these few, and then sleep sound for a long time with no trouble thoughts," suggested one, a patriarch from Ui-la-ua.

"That is true," said Tahn-té —"but if we do that

way we would be no better than these men of iron. Their god talks two ways for killing, and their men live two ways. Our god when he taught our fathers, gave them but one law for killing, it was this: —" Go not to battle. A time will come for you to fight, and the stars in the sky will mark that time. When the star of the ice land moves — then the battle time will be here! Until then live as brothers and make houses — use the spear only when the enemy comes to break your walls." That is the world of the Great Ruler. To kill these men only holds the matter for your sons to decide some other year."

" What then is to do? " demanded a man of Naim-be —" they do not break the walls, but they are beside the gates."

" When the Yutah and the Navahu traders come with skin robes, what is it you do? " asked Tahn-té.

" We trade them our corn and our melons and we get the robes."

" And,"— added Tahn-té —" the governor of each village gives them room outside the walls when the night comes, and the chief of war sees that the gate is closed, and that a guard never goes down from the roof! If these men are precious to you, make of them brothers, and send prayer thoughts on their trail, but never forget that they are traders, and never forget that the watchers must be on the roof so long as they stay in your land! They come for that which they can carry away, and once they have it you will be in their hearts only as the grass of last year on the hills — a forgotten thing over which they ride to new harvests! "

" You talk as one who has eaten always from the

same bowl with the strangers," spoke one man from Oj-ke —" yet you are young, and some of these men are not young."

" Because —"— said Tahn-té catching the implied criticism of his youth and his prominence —" because in the talking paper which their god made, there is records of all their men since ancient days. They have never changed. Their gods tell them to go out and kill and take all that which the enemy will not give,— to take also the maids for slaves,— that is their book of laws from the Beginning. Since I was a boy I have studied all these laws. It was my work. By the god a man has in his heart we can know the man! Their god is a good god for traders, and a strong god for war. But the watchers of the night must never leave the gate unguarded when they camp under the walls."

All this Padre Vicente heard, all this and much of it was comprehended by him. Plainly it was not well to seek converts when the pernicious tongue of the Cacique could speak in their ears.

" It may be that we abide many days beside you," he said gently and with manner politic —" also it may be that we visit the wise men of the other villages, and take to them the good will of our king. The things said to-day we will think of kindly until that time. And in the end you will all learn of the true god, and will know that we have come to be your brothers if you are the children of the true god."

Upon which he held up the cross, and bent his head as in prayer, and went first up the ladder into the light. He was pale and the sweat stood on his face. It had been a hard hour.

The others followed in due order, but Don Diego

eyed the wizard Cacique with a curiosity great as was his horror.

"Alone he has studied books without a tutor — sacred books — since his boyhood!" he said to Don Ruy —"think of that, and of the grief we had to persuade you to the reading of even the saintly lives! There is devilish art in this — the angels guard us from further sorcery — without a tutor! A savage magician to study strange tongues without a tutor! It is nothing short of infernal!"

But despite all opinion, Don Ruy waited and approached the man of the white robe and the cruel logic.

"You have been my friend,"— he said —"will you not eat with me and talk in quiet of these matters?"

"You do not fear then to be marked as the comrade of a sorcerer?" asked Tahn-té. "You must be a man of strength in your own land, Excellency, to dare offend your priest by such offer. Is the Holy Office no longer supreme in Spain?"

"How do you — an Indian — know of the office, of the duties of the workers there?"

"Two years of my life I lived in the camp of Coronada. To listen was part of my work. Strange and true tales were told in the long nights. They are still with me."

"But — you will come?"

Tahn-té looked at him and smiled — but the smile held no gladness.

"My thanks to you, Señor. To you I give the prayer beads — it is good to give them to you. More than that is not for me to do. My work takes me from where the feast songs are sung."

Then he wrapped about him the white robe made of deer skins, and it was as if he had enshouded himself in silence not to be broken.

With reluctance Don Ruy went up the ladder and left him there. The sweetness of the outer air was good after the reek of many smokes in the kiva — and the adventurer stood on the terrace and drew great breaths and gazed across the tree fringed water, and thought it all a goodly sight well worth the jealousy of the pagan guardian.

Don Diego had accompanied the padre to their own quarters, but Juan Gonzalvo was across the court speaking quietly to Yahn Tsyn-deh whose vanity required some soothing that she had been shut out by Tahn-té from council and her coveted official tasks.

At the wall of the terrace waited the secretary in some hesitation, yet striving for boyish courage to speak the things outside the duty of his office.

"Your pardon, Excellency," he said lowly. "It is not for me to advise, but I heard some words of the two over there — may I speak?"

"Yes, my lad, and quickly as may be. Their two heads are over close together for discretion. I fear I shall have the task and expense of providing a duenna for my beauteous interpreter."

"Little enough of love there is with that dame!" commented the other,—"it is hate — your Excellency — and for you to say whether their private hates may not be a breeder of woe for all of us."

"You mean —? — and Don Ruy motioned with his head towards the kiva.

"Yes: — it is the Cacique. The woman for some cause is bitter with hate against him.— Juan Gonzalvo is eager to listen — he is restless as quicksilver already with suspicion of strange things. In the far

south he and his comrades made little odds of riding rough shod over the natives — here he would do the same at a word from the padre."

"And that word we can ill afford when we are but a handful!" decided Don Ruy,— "Hum! — for instant annihilation of the proud pagan we can depend on Gonzalvo, the padre, and Maestro Diego, if it came to a showing of hands. There must be no showing: — Capitan Gonzalvo!"

"Yes, Excellency."

Gonzalvo crossed quickly to him, while Yahn stood sulkily watching the three with lazy, half closed eyes.

"You forget none of the pagan Cacique's words — or his defiance of Holy Church?

"His defiance of Holy God! — Excellency," answered Gonzalvo hotly,—"and that is not all — I have heard things — I am putting them together — You saw his eyes — scarcely Indian eyes! You heard his accursed logic of heresy — not all Indian — that! Indians may think like that in their accursed hearts, but they do not find the quick words to argue with their superiors as does this insolent dog! Listen, Don Ruy, for I have found the clue — and he belongs to me — that man!"

"To you — Capitan?"

"To me! You have listened to mad things of his birth and of his clan — the girl of the twilight and the seed bearer — well, what I tell you seems even more mad, but it will be true if ever we get to the end of it — that story of the thrice accursed Teo the Greek — you recall it? — he did without doubt cross this river and saw the Pueblos,— this sorcerer is of his spawn — he and his medicine mother come back in good time with their Star God story, and the seeds — the identical seeds of the padre's story! See you not

what it all leads to? He has the blood of the Greek in him: — in any Christian land he has enough of it to be broken on the wheel for his damnable heresies!"

"But — since we are not in a Christian land, and doubtless shall never see him in a Christian land?"

"That narrows it down to man and man, Excellency! His father made a slave of mine — my earliest oath on the Cross and on the Faith, was vengeance against the Greek and all his blood! God of Heaven! — to think that of all the priests of Mexico you chose the one who knew that story! — and that of all the Indian tribes, we have come to the one where the half Greek sorcerer rules like a Turk! Don Ruy — you have led me north to vengeance — my sword and my arm are forever to your cause."

"Many thanks to you, Capitan, but in this case it is not your sword I shall command — except to remain in its scabbard! — but your speech I must silence while we give this matter of the Cacique a season of prayer and due consideration."

"Excellency — I do not understand —"

"You understand at least all that a soldier need, Capitan," said Don Ruy with smiling ease. "Your commission comes from me,— and I did not bestow it for the furtherance of private quarrels. Until I give the word, your speech must not again mention the thing you suspect —"

"But — the padre —"

"Least of all must the padre or Senor Brancedori hear even a whisper of it! Neither private vengeance, nor religious war must be pursued while the company is on our present quest."

"You would have me break my oath on the cross

— save a heretic alive who belongs in the deepest pit? — Excellency! "

Gonzalvo's voice had much of pleading. He felt himself a man cheated of his righteous dues.

" Your holy vengeance will keep until our quest is over — and the more time to prepare your soul," suggested Don Ruy. " Then — if the gold is found, and all goes well, you two can have open fight before we take the road to the south. But until that lucky hour, the first and the last word for you is — silence! "

Gonzalvo stood, staring in baffled rage. It was to the padre he should have gone first. He had played the wrong card in the game. Was Don Ruy bewitched as well as his horse?

" At least I shall have a double debt to pay when my time does come, Excellency "— he said at last. " His pagan discourse warrants him a Christian knife, and will insure him a corner of hell when I send him there! "

At a respectful distance the secretary had seated himself, and rested with brow on fists.

" How now? "— asked Don Ruy. " You seem little heartened by all this brave talk of righteousness. Think you the monk's life of cloister and garden looks fair after all? "

" In truth, Señor, if you have the desire to despatch a lackey to your lady love across the sands, you may choose me if you like! " agreed the lad. " I have neither heart nor stomach for this contest of souls or no souls — the pagan blood for my far away grandmother unfits me for judgement — this heretic of the white robe is fighting the same fight of my own people — but he fights it like one inspired by the

nahual of a god. Yet — there is only one finish to it! Bulls-hide shields and arrows stand not long before steel coats and leaden bullets — I would be elsewhere when the finish comes, Señor."

"The nahual of a god!" repeated Don Ruy, "now what may that mean in Christian speech?"

"In Christian speech it does not exist — the church has spilled much blood that it be washed from the pagan mind," said the lad. "But the nahual is the guardian angel or guardian devil born to earth with each man — it is like his shadow, yet unseen, it is part of the Great Mystery from the other side of the dawn and the other side of the dark. Once open worship was given to the Nahual, and their priests were strong. Now if the worshippers do meet, it is in secret. This man has truly drawn to himself a strong nahual and it should give him much of the magic which the good padre tells us is accursed."

"For a boy you have a fund of strange lore!" commented Don Ruy,—"too much for good company in the night time,— small wonder that you range abroad and dream under the stars! The monks never taught you all of it. Come: — tell me truly of your escapade — what sent you to our ranks?"

The lad flushed, then shrugged his shoulders and regarded the toes of his sandals.

"Excellency — if you require that I tell you — I am most certain never to get the commission to carry message to lady of yours!" he said so whimsically that the excellency laughed and promised him constant employment on such embassies if fortune found him ladies.

"Then: — I must speak myself a failure! A damsel did trust me with some such message to her cavalier and seeing that the love was all on one side — and that side her own — I dared not go back and face her — not even her guerdon could I by any means steal from him; brief: — I saved my neck by following you and leaving the land!"

"Was she so high in power?"

"Yes: —and — no, Excellency. She was, with all her estates, so close under the guard of the Viceroy that she could win all favors but — freedom!"

"How?" queried Don Ruy with wrinkled brow — his thoughts travelling fast to the converse of the gentle maniac as told him by the padre. "Has the Viceroy then a collection of pretty birds in cages — and must they sing only for the viceregal ear?"

"I cannot tell as to other cages, Señor, but this one was meant to sing only for a viceregal relative: — if she proved heretic, then the convent waited and her lands were otherwise disposed of."

"Hum! Then even in the provinces such rulings work as swiftly as at court! Well, what outer charge was there?"

"The strongest possible charge, Excellency. The mother of the girl had Indian blood, and, despite the wealth and Christian teaching of her husband — returned to Indian worship at his death. For that she was called mad, and ended her days in a Convent. The daughter of course will also be mad if she refuses to be guided by the good friends who select her husband — that husband was her only gate to freedom, knowing which the maid did certainly do some mad things: — to strangers she tried to speak — from her duenna she slipped out in the night time —

oh there is no doubt that all the evidence will show plainly in court that she is more mad than her mother —"

"Chico!"— The hand of Don Ruy rested on the shoulder of the lad —"You are telling me the hidden part of a story to which I have listened from other lips — and your eyes have tears in them! — Tush! — be not ashamed lad. You yourself have heart for the lady?"

"Not in a way unseemly," retorted the lad, dashing the water from his eyes,—"to think of the mother dead like that behind the bars is not a cheery thing! As for the daughter — I dare call myself her foster brother, and I dare pray for her that she finds the chance to die in the open!"

"What a little world it is!" said the adventurer. "Do you mean that you did come with a message — and that your heart failed you as to consequences? You failed the lady — my unknown lady of the tryst?"

"Excellency: — the maid thought you a person of adventure, and she dared hope to buy your services — then — you two know best what you whispered in the dark! — but she no longer thought of purchase money in exchange for helping her escape to a ship; — God knows what she thought of, for you must not forget that she is called mad, Señor! But with all her madness she would not have approached your highness with the same freedom had she dreamed that your rank was high as the camp whispered to me the day I came for speech with you! That rank told me a story I could not go back and tell her, Señor — so — I used my forged letter written on viceregal paper, and secured service with a man instead of a maid."

"And left her waiting?"

"I could do her no help by going back — she is no worse off than if I had not come."

"She sent you for the silken broidery?"

"She said if you could come to her service, the scarf or a certain page of a certain book would serve as a sign: — letters are difficult things — boys who carry them are tripped up at times and learn the might of a lash. To send a jewelled bauble and ask for the silken scarf was a less harmful thing for the messengers."

"You imp of an Indian devil! a souvenir was sent me — and a message — and I am hearing no word of it until now in this pagan land!"

"Excellency: — the message is of little moment now — it was only a matter of a tryst — and you were too far on the journey! But the ardor of the Capitan Gonzalvo may bring us all strange moments, — and it may be some graves! If mine should be among them, and you should live to go back, you can take from my neck the bauble trusted to me by the lady. It is one of the records of her madness. But you will not quite laugh at it, Señor — and you will forgive me that I could not give it to you as she had dreamed in her madness that I could easily do."

"Mad? By our Lady! — there has been no madness from first to last but my own when I was tricked away from her by lies pious and politic! Oh — oh! — our padre was in it deep, and I have served their purpose! And you — you girl-faced little devil — what share is yours in all this? Whose tool have you been from first to last?"

"Whose?" — the lad had regained his careless mien —" surely not that of Dame Venus or her son, Master Cupid! It is well for me to find employ in

the wilderness — never again dare I seek service with lord or lady!"

"Your lady lost her wits ere she made you ambassador on a love quest!"

"Without doubt you speak truth, Excellency. I might add — (had I not been whipped into politeness to my superiors!) that the deluded maid had lost her wits ere she fell into love with a face seen from a balcony — or with a voice whispering to her in the darkness of a rose bower!"

Don Ruy looked at him without much of sweetness in the glance.

"I've two minds regarding you," he stated,— "and one of them is to thresh you for faithlessness and a forward tongue!"

"Then I beg that you choose the other mind!" said the secretary, on his feet, alert, and ready to make a run if need be. "Don Diego could not well spare me in the midst of his struggles with the heathen, and his desire that honest things be set down in the 'Relaciones.' Moreover — Excellency, it would take many words to convince that pious gentleman that I had been faithless in aught — to you!"

There was a pitiful little quaver in the last words by which Don Ruy was made ashamed of his threat, for despite his anger that the lad was over close in the confidence of the unknown Mexican maid, yet the stripling had been a source of joy as they rode side by side over the desert reaches, and he knew that only for him had those Indian thoughts been given that were heresy most rank for any other ears. In ways numberless had the devotion of the lad been manifest.

But Don Ruy had little heart to discuss the matter, he was still flushed with the annoying thought that

the young cub had been let know every whisper of the moment under the roses. He walked away without more words.

And Yahn who was watching the two, was very glad in her heart. She could plainly see that those two who had laughed at her sometimes, were having a quarrel that was a trouble to each, for Don Ruy walked away with an angry frown, and the page stood by the terrace steps a long time, and looked across the river with no smile on his face.

CHAPTER XIV

THE COURIER AND THE MAID

ERE the morning star saw its face in the sacred lake of the Na-im-be mountains, Tahn-té, the Po-Ahtun-ho, had done a thing not of custom: — he was leaving the governor to hear the prayers of Povi-whah, while he, for reasons politic, made the run to the most northern of pueblos.

Much in the council of the strangers had shown him their power over the old men whose minds were divided between dread of the savage tribes, and wonder if the youth of Tahn-té gave him warrant for all the knowledge expressed by him.

The governor of Te-gat-ha had sent no men to the council of Povi-whah. From that fact had Tahn-té reasoned that Te-gat-ha meant to show no favors to the white strangers. Te-gat-ha was of itself, very stronge, else it could not have held its walls against the Yutah and the wild tribes of the north. Therefore would Te-gat-ha be a good comrade.

Twenty leagues it lay across the river and the mountain, but Tahn-té had ere the dawn taken the bath in the living stream of the river: — it runs and never tires, and its virtues are borrowed by the bather who lets it have its way with him while he whispers the prayers of the stars of the morning.

He knew that this was the moon and the time of the moon, when the summer ceremonies were made in Te-gat-ha to the God of Creations, and because of

a wonderful visitor in the sky, he knew that special ceremonies would be held. The Ancient Star was near the zenith — never must it depart without a life to strengthen it on the downward trail!

The Po-Ahtun-ho in his ceremonial person never leaves the region of the sanctuary, any more than the pope across the seas dare go adventuring. It was as Tahn-té the courier, that he carried the message of the Po-Athun to the man of Te-gat-ha that no shadow of doubt be left in his mind as to where they stood in the Pueblo brotherhood.

The mountain forest of Te-gat-ha, and the rose thickets close to the brown walls make it a place of beauty. Through the open court between the century old buildings, runs the mountain stream with its message from the heights to the hidden river cutting deep down in the green plain to the west.

The valley of Povi-whah was beautiful in itself as a garden is good to look on when the spirits of the Growing Things have worked well with the man who covers the seed, but Te-gat-ha brought thoughts of a different beauty — even as did the memory of Wálpi in Tusayan.

Wálpi breathed the spirit of a tragic life, the last fortress of a mysterious people. Te-gat-ha sat enthroned facing the setting sun. Ancient, beautiful and insolent — with the insolence which refused to grow old though she had been mistress of many centuries.

Tahn-té the dreamer,— the student of mystic things, was subtly conscious of that almost personal — almost feminine appeal of Te-gat-ha. Strong in its beauty as in its battles — it yet retained a sensuous atmosphere that was as the mingling of rose bloom and wild plum blossom, of crushed mint grown

in the shadows of the moist places, and clinging feathery clematis, binding by its tendrils green thickets into walls impregnable.

He could hear the beating of the tombé while yet out of sight of the sentinel on the western wall of the terrace. Medicine was being made, or dances were being danced.

While he ran through the forest his thoughts had drifted again and again to the vision of the bluebird maid. Was she the earth form of the God-Maid on the south mesa where the great star hung low? Was she the Goddess Estsanatlehi who wore for him the color of the blue earth jewel sacred to her? — was she the shadow of the dream-maid of all his boy days — the Kā-ye-povi who had gone from earth to the Light beyond the light? All the wild places spoke of her, each stream he crossed made him see the young limbs pictured in the pool — each bird song made him remember the symbol sent to him by the vision — the world was a sweeter place because of the vision.

It came even against his will between himself and the priest of the robe who had called him "Sorcerer" — and who was the real general he would have to do battle with in the near days. The others he scarcely thought of, but that one of the wise tactful speech he must think of much.

Then while he told himself that the thought of the men of iron must never be forgotten for even the sweetest of forest dreams; — in that same moment the rustling of the wind in the piñons made him thrill with the closeness of the remembered vision as no sight of living maid had ever made him thrill: — might it be magic from Those Above to try his

strength? Might the memory of the maid and the pool, be akin to that temptation of the babe and the arms of the mother outlined on the shadows of the ancient graven stone?

That had plainly been false enchantment — and he had danced it away in the prayer dance to the Ancient Father. It had not returned even in his dreams. But the maid of the bluebird had not ever gone quite away. So close she seemed at times that if he turned his head quickly in the places of shadows he felt that he might see her again before the Spirit People hid the body of beauty.

And then — as he ran, and turned where the trail circled a rugged column of stone at the edge of the piñon woods,— there a shadow flitted as a bird past the great gray barrier. He turned from the trail almost without volition of his own, and followed the flitting shadow, and — the maid of the bluebird wing was again before him!

Not merging into the shadows as before. Against the grey wall of rock she stood as a wild hunted thing at bay — breathless, panting — but with head thrown back to look death in the face.

But death was not what she saw in his eyes — only a wonder great as her own — and with the wonder fear,— and something else than fear.

Plainly she had been bound by thongs of raw-hide, for one yet hung from her wrist. Much of her body was bare, her greatest garment was a deer-skin robe held in her hand as she ran.

Because of this, could he see that her body and her arms were decorated with ceremonial symbols in the sacred colors, and the painting of them was not complete. It was evident she had been chosen for the

forest dance of the maidens who were young. It was plain also that she had resisted, and had in some way broken from the people.

At the something other than fear in his eyes, she gained courage, and at the bluebird's wing in his head band, she stared and touched the one in her own braids, and then touched her own breast.

"Doli (Blue Bird) — me!" she said appealingly. "Navahu"— then she held her hand out as though measuring the height of a child.—"Te-hua — me!"

"Te-hua!"— he caught her hand and knew that she was not a vision, though he had first known of her in a vision. She was a living maid, and twice on wilderness trails had she come to him!

"Te-hua —you?" he half whispered, but in Te-hua words she could not answer him — only begged rapidly in Navahu for protection — and motioned with fear towards the villages where the tombé was sounding.

To give help to an escaped captive of Te-gat-ha while on the trail to ask friendship of Te-gat-ha, was an act not known in Indian ethics — but as when he had been wakened by her in the cañon of the high walls — so it was now — the outer world drifted far, and the eyes of the girl — pleading — were the only real things. In his hours on the trail through the forest he had thought the ever-present picture of her in his heart might be strange new magic for his undoing, but to hear her tremulous girl voice: — and to see the broken thong, and the symbols of the most primitive of tribal dances, drove into forgetfulness the thought of all magic that was false magic. The gods had sent the vision of her in the dawn of the sacred mountain, that he — Tahn-té — might know her for his own when she crossed his trail for

help. The Navahu goddess of the earth jewel had surely sent her — else why the pair of blue wings between them? The symbolism of it was conclusive to the Indian mind, and he reached out his hand.

"Come!" he said gently. "Little sister,— come you with me!"

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When the sentinel on the wall of Te-gat-ha sighted a strange runner who ran to them, and ran with swiftness, the word went to the governor, and he sent his man of the right hand to the gate of the wall.

In times of feasts these two had met before the days when the prayers were listened to by Tahn-té, and the greeting given to the visitors was a greeting to a friend.

As they crossed the court, Tahn-té could see that confusion and alarm was there. A woman who had been chidden was weeping, and the governor of war had his scouts at the place in the wall where the water ran under the bridge of the great logs — that was the only place where one could creep through without passing the gates, where the sentinel could always see.

"She is a witch!" wailed the woman who was in tears —"The painting was being done on her,— she would have been complete — and then it was the pot boiled over in the ashes: — they blinded my eyes, and the child was in the ashes also, and the body of him was burned. Could I see the witch when my eyes were blind? Could I hear the witch when my child screamed? Could I know she would cover herself with a deer skin and go into the ground, or into the clouds? On no trail of earth can you find her. She is a witch who brings bad luck to my house!"

But the men, heeding not her words, went over the ground in ways towards the mountains, and looked

with keenness on all the tracks of women's feet.

Beyond the words of the women, Tahn-té heard nothing more of the person who was painted almost to completeness ere she went into the clouds, or into the ground. It was not etiquette to make questions. The wise old governor gave greeting to the visitor as if no thing had happened more unusual than the rising or setting of the sun.

Tahn-té had been many times to Te-gat-ha when the Sun races were made in the Moon of Yellow leaves. At that time the Sun Father grows weak, and the races are made that he may look down and see the earth children as they show strength, and the prayer of the race is that the Sun Father goes not far away, but seeks strength also, and grows warm again after a season.

Thus Tahn-té knew kindly the people, and the chief men were called to hear why a runner had been sent at this time to the brothers of the North.

The head men wrapped themselves in the robes of ceremony, the younger priests painted their bodies with the white, and into the kiva of council they descended with their visitor of high office.

On the shrine there, Tahn-té placed a fragment of the sun symbol taken from the pouch at his girdle. Before a white statue of the weeping god he placed it, and the Keeper of the Sacred Fire there, breathed on his hand, and threw fragrant dried herbs of magic on the live coals, that all evil and all discord be driven out by the fumes, and when the smoke drifted unwards and out by the way of the sky, the talk was made.

With briefness Tahn-té stated all heard in the council of Povi-whah concerning the wishes of the strangers from the South.

Into the Kiva of Council They Descended

The men smoked the sacred smoke of council and listened, and when all was said, they nodded to each other.

"That which you say is that which the tribes have always talked about when the wild people came for war. In old days of our fathers, we people of the houses and the fields did make compact with each other as brothers. But always it has been broken, often it had to be broken. We are far apart. When the Yutah comes from the north, and the Pawnee from the east — and the Apache and the Navahu from every place, the men of each village must look to their own women. He cannot go to his brother to learn if he also is having war."

"That is true," said Tahn-té. "But the wild people fight and go away again. If these strangers find the symbol of the sun in our land, they will never go away — more will come — and then more always! I have seen the talking leaves of their people. If they get room for their feet, they then ask the field; if the way of the door is opened to them, they then take the house. They and their animals will ride us down as the buffalo tramp under foot the grass on the wide lands."

"That other year the white strangers came. They staid not long. This time not so many come — next time not any ever come — maybe so!"

"Maybe so! echoed Tahn-té, but shook his head in sadness. Like the men of his own village, these men had the hopefulness of children that all would be made well.

"If their god is so strong a god — and they come with good gifts, is it not well to make treaty and have them as brothers?" asked the old governor. "With the thunder and the lightning given to them instead

of arrows, they could do good warrior work for those who were precious to them."

"That is so," agreed Tahn-té —"but the men of dark skins will never be precious to the white men of the beards — except they make slaves who obey,— who carry the water, and bring wood for the fire."

"Men carry the water?"

"They are not men when they become slaves — they are not people any more!"

"We did not hear that," said the governor. "Do these men tell it that way?"

"No — not in that way. But talking leaves of their god tells them that dark men of other gods than theirs must be ever as slaves to the white men of iron and all of their kind. It has been like that always. The talking leaves tell them how to make slaves — and how to make war on all people who refuse to say that their god must be the only god."

"And that white god sends talking leaves of a spirit tree?"

"It is so," said Tahn-té: —"Many leaves! The spirit of that tree was once a strong spirit, but the white people caught it with magic and shut it in a book, and the spirit grows weak in the book — the heart of the Most Mysterious cannot be shut in a thing like that. They have magic, but the heart does not sing to that magic — only the eyes see it."

"Yet these strangers are wise," ventured one of the council, "such leaves might be good to instruct quickly the youth of the clans."

"It is so," agreed Tahn-té again. "But when the gods are caught in the leaves of a book, is when they no longer speak in silence to the hearts of men. On a day when we walk no more on the Earth Trail,

the names of our gods may also be written on the leaves of a spirit tree that is dead. Think of this and warn your sons to think of this! The youths of Povi-whah and of Kah-po hearken with joy to the trumpets of the men of iron, but the music for the desert gods is the music of the flute — let it not be silenced by trumpets of brass made by white men who conquer!"

Some of the men of the council looked at each other, and wondered in their hearts if the youth of Tahn-té did not make him dream false things and think them true. It was scarcely to be believed that one people would fight because another people found the Great Mystery — and prayed to It for strength to live well — and to live long — but called It by another Prayer Name!

They knew that in things of sacred magic Tahn-té was more wise than any other; — other youth were trained only in their own societies — but the son of the Woman of the Twilight reached out for the Thought back of the outer thought in all orders, and in different tribes.

Yet — they doubted him now and for the first time! They did not think that Tahn-té spoke with a crooked tongue, but some one had lied to him in the days when he crossed the land with the man Coronado; — or maybe the talking leaves had lied on some dark night of magic!

But however that might be, the Great Mystery had never sent the word to kill a people because of their prayers. The men of the council knew that could not be. But they were respectful to the young Po-Ahtun-ho, and they did not say so. That he had put aside his dignity of office, and come himself to Te-

gat-ha for council, was a great honor for Te-gat-ha.

And they smoked in silence, and did not say the thing they thought.

But Tahn-té the Ruler, read their hearts in their silence, and for the first time his own heart grew sick. In Povi-whah there was the jealousy of the war chief — and of the governor as well, and that, he thought, made them blind to much. But these men had only honor in their hearts for him and no jealousy. Yet to make them see motives of the strangers, as he saw them, was not possible; and to tell them that the men of iron gave worship to a jealous god was to brand himself for always as foolish in their eyes! They had thought him wise — but not again could they think him wise as to the foreign men, or the reading of their books!

The early stars were alight in the sky when the men came up from the council. In the house of the governor the evening meal was long ready.

From the place of the dance in the forest, men and maids were coming: — under the branches of the great trees they were coming, but among them was not the maid of the thong and the unfinished paintings. Tahn-té, seeing that it was so, ate with his hosts the rolls of paper-like bread, and the roasted meat of the deer.

It was a silent meal, for it was his first day of failure. All other things he had won — but to win his brothers to brotherhood against the strongest enemy they or their fathers had ever met — was a thing beyond his strength.

They had chosen to be blind, and for the blind, no one can see!

Standing on the terrace, the governor spoke alone to Tahn-té of the thing which the men of iron sought

— it was the same thing Alvarado had asked of when he had come north from Coronado's camp. It was strange that the sign of the Sun Father was a thing the white men sought ever to carry from the land. It must be strong medicine and very precious to them!

It was not possible for Tahn-té to make clear that the virtue of the yellow metal was not a sacred thing — only a thing of barter as shell beads or robes might be.

"Is it as they say,"— said his host after a smoke of silence —"is it as they say that the Order of the Snake is again made strong by you in Povi-whah?"

"It is true," said Tahn-té. "The help I have is not much. The Great Snake they all revere for the sacred reasons, but only the very old men know that with the Ancients the medicine of the wild brother snakes was strong medicine for the hearts of men. Maybe I can live long enough to teach the young men that the strong medicine is yet ours, and that the wild brother snake can always help us prove to the gods that it is ours."

"It is true that it is ours," assented the old man, —"and it is good when the visions come to show us how it is ours,"— then after a little, he added:— "For the sleep you will stay with my clan?" but Tahn-té, standing on the terrace, shook his head and pointed to the south.

"Thanks that you wish me," he said,—"but the work is there and the watching is there. When the smoke is over — I ask for your prayers and — I go!"

Steadily he ran on the trail past the thickets of the rose, and the great rock by the trail — steadily under the stars a long way. Then out of the many small night sounds of the wilderness he heard behind him

the long call of a night bird in flight. Only a little ways did he go when again that little song of three descending notes came to him. It was very close this time, but he neither halted nor made more haste. For all the heed given it he might not have hearkened to it more than to the cricket in the grass.

Yet it spoke clearly to his ears. He knew that sentinals had been placed along his trail, and as he ran steadily, and alone, past each, he knew that the watchers were keen of eye and ear, and that the last two sent each other the signal "All is well,"— also he knew that the signal would be echoed back along the trail until each watcher would know that their visitor was on the trail alone, and all was well, and each could go back to Te-gat-ha and report to the war chief, and find sleep.

The watchfulness told him also that the maid they sought was one of importance. The visitor in the sky, called by his people the Ancient Star,— and called by Fray Luis the planet Venus, gave special meaning to a captive from the tribe of an enemy. It saved some clan from devoting a son or a daughter to sacrifice.

He did not halt at once even after the last call was sent back into the night, and he was far on the south trail ere he turned and more slowly retraced his steps. No lingering watcher must be overtaken by him on the trail.

So it was that Arcturus (the watcher of the night when the sun is away) was high overhead when he came again to the place of the great rock where as youths, he and his comrades climbed on each others' shoulders — and even then only the most agile and daring had scaled the smooth wall, and lay hidden there in a water worn depression. Many scouts

might pass it without thought that a maid could be hidden there!

But the mere whisper of a whistle like the bluebird call brought her head over the edge, and their eyes met in the starlight.

Half the day, and half the night, had she lain there waiting for his call, hearing more than once the pad of the feet, or the panting breath of scouts: — she had even heard words of the sentinels sent from Te-gat-ha ahead of Tahn-té — eager as wolves they were in search of the maid — for it was evil medicine most potent to lose a captive after the symbols of ceremony had been drawn on the body!

But all her fear of them gave her no fear of Tahn-té. His first look into her eyes had been the look which said strange things, and sweet things — it was as if he had spoken thanks that he had found her on the trail.

And when he held up his arm to her in the night, she wrapped closely the deerskin robe about her, and slipped downward into his embrace.

The wall was so high he had himself gone ahead and dragged her up by help of the skin robe. And, strong though he was, the weight of her as she slipped downward against him staggered him, and his arms went tightly around her slender girl's body to save her, and to save himself.

And in that moment one of the magical things came to pass in the starlight, her young breasts were bare and held close to his own body. Her heart beats were felt by him as she lay limp for a space in his arms, and Tahn-té knew that for all other things in his life words could be found — but for the thrill of the touch of her body there were no words. It was as if a star had slipped out of the sky and given its

glow and radiance to his life — the music of existence had touched him — and the magic of it held him dumb and still.

And he knew that the magic of the maid was born of the Great Mystery, and that a new life for him was born as each heard the heart beats of the other.

It was as truly a new marking for the Life Trail as had been the prayer made as a boy at the mesa shrine to answer the young moon message of the God of the Wilderness.

The maid stirred in his clasp and drew herself shyly away from him. At her first little movement, his arms grew tense about her, then they fell away, and he watched her, while with head averted from him, she arranged as well as might be her scant garb. There could be no words between them, but his touch was tender as he took her hand and led her out to the trail. He felt that she must know all he felt — and all the dreams into which the white shadow of her had entered — the sacred fourth shadow cast not by the body, but by the spirit, and linking itself with kindred spirit even while the human body breathed and moved and cast the black first shadow that all people may see.

The black first shadow all can see as a man moves or as he stands still, and the two gray shadows many can see after a man is on the death trail or when the breath has gone away. These remain with a man because they are of his body, but the white shadow is the shadow of the breath of the Great Mystery — it is as the perfume of the flower, the song of the bird, and the love of the man.

Fear lent the girl fleetness as she ran beside him in the night, and he marvelled at her.— No pueblo girl could have kept that pace. It was plain that she had

lived with the rovers of the desert. All the long hours had she been without food or drink, yet she ran like a boy, and with the swiftness of a boy.

When the dawn broke, and the morning star showed each the face of the other, they had reached the trail by the river. From the west came black wind-swept clouds to meet the sun, and in the south the angered God of Thunder spoke. Tahn-té looked at the girl whose eyes showed the weariness of the long strain — his thoughts dwelt on the woes she must have lived through ere he found her: — plainly she could not run unfed to the hills of his people, and plainly since the storm was meeting them, the wise time to halt must be ere it swept the valley.

From the well known trail he had departed before the dawn, and the way they went was a hard way across the heights where earth's heart-fires had split the land and left great jagged monuments of stone;— and red ash as if even now scarcely free from the heat of flame.

Into one of the great crevices,— wide, and roofed by rock — he led the strange maid. Water came from a break in the great grey wall, and sand had drifted there on the wind, and the girl with a moan that was of weariness sank down there where the sand was. Tahn-té felt himself strangely hurt by that moan and wondered that it should be so.

She was only a maid after all, and the little woeful cry made him think of a hurt child he would have lifted in his arms and carried home to its mother. But the maid of the bluebird wing was far from mother and from her people; — no words had they exchanged in the long trail of the night, he knew not anything but that she spoke Navahu, and would have him think she wished to be Te-hua.

When she lay so very still that he could not see even the sign of life in her face, he went close and touched her — and then he saw that the spirit of her had truly gone on the trail of the twilight — she was no longer alive as other people are alive.

He lifted her to where the water ran, and with prayer let the cool drops of the living spring touch her face until the life came back, and her eyes opened wide with terror at sight of him bending above her, but he whispered as to a child —" Navin (my own) " and then " Kā-ye-povi "— which was to call her the Blossom of the Spirit, the name had been always with him in the Love-maiden Dream; — and this maid was the dream come true!

He drew her back from that strange border land of life where the strong gods of shadow wait; — and then the whisper of the blossom name took the fear from her dazed eyes — she clung to his hands and in a sort of breathless joy repeated the name " Kā-ye-povi — Kā-ye-povi! "— Me! Kā-ye-povi! "

" You! — Doli — Navahu! "

She nodded assent. " Yes — it is so — now, " she said —" but once when little,"— she made the sign for the height of a child —" Te-hua, not Navahu — then Kā-ye-povi! "

Thus it was Tahn-té found Kā-ye-povi after the many years, and knew that the Great Mystery had set his foot on the trail to Te-gat-ha that he, and not another, should find her!

From traders, and from an occasional Navahu prisoner, Tahn-té had learned Navahu words, and Navahu god thoughts, and now he strove with eagerness to speak their language, even though haltingly. and question of her coming to him — to him!

To a new master she had been sold by the old

people who had owned her long, and many of the Navahu had gone north for deer — and perhaps for buffalo, and she had been taken with them. So far had they travelled that Tse-cōme-u-piñ, the sacred, had been pointed out to her — and as a bird will seek its own place of nesting, had she sought the Te-hua land by fleeing to the sacred mountain. In the night time she had fled from her new master,— from a tall pine where she had climbed, had she seen them search the trail for her. In vain they had searched, and alone she had wandered many days. Almost had she reached the Te-hua towns of the river when some traders of Te-gat-ha had found her in the forest. To their own town they had taken her and had traded her for shell beads and for corn — the rest Tahn-té knew!

He strung his bow while he listened,— and while the thunder shook the earth he slipped through the crevices of the rock and lay hidden at the edge of a mountain morass where the reeds grew tall, and wild things fed — ahead of the storm small animals might cross the open there to reach the shelter of the rock walls — and Kā-ye-povi must not go unfed.

A rabbit he killed and covered each track of his feet from the place where he picked it up. When he took it to her it had been cleaned and washed in a little cascade below the shelter he had found for her. With him he took also dry twigs and dry piñon boughs, that the fire made might not carry the odor of green wood.

The sheets of rain were flowing steadily towards them from the west, the earth trembled as the God of Thunder spoke, and the lances of fire were flung from the far sky and splintered on the rocks of the mountain.

The maid lay, wide eyed and still, where he had left her. That she feared was plain to be seen, and at his coming tears of gladness shone in her eyes.

To see that light in her face as he came back to her brought to him a joy that was new and sweet. He did not speak to her. He made the fire in silence, but at every crash of the storm he smiled at her, and made prayers, and threw sacred white pollen to the four ways, and the feeling that he was as guardian to the maid whose very name had been a part of his boy dreams, was a sweet thought.

It was a wonderful thing that out of the dreams she had grown real, and had covered the trails until she had reached him! It was sweet that his hand had touched her and told him that the maid was a real maid of pulsing heart and tremulous breath.

But with all the sweetness of it, there was a strange thought fluttering over his mind like a moth or a butterfly. It did not find lodgment there, but it did not go quite away, and ere he offered to her the meat roasted in the red coals of the piñon wood, he scattered prayer pollen between them as on a shrine.

The line of the white between them was as the threshold of a door over which a man may not step. No man crosses threshold of another if the wife of that man is alone there,— and no brother goes into the house where his sister is without other companion. This was the law from the time of the ancient days, and belongs to many tribes.

To the Navahu it did not belong, and the maid knew only that the white pollen meant prayer, and that she was circled by sacred things, and by thought so sweet that her eyes rested on the sands when he gazed at her.

So sweet did the thought grow that they no longer

tried to speak as at first, and compare words Navahu, and words Te-hua; — her own forgotten tongue.

To whisper "Kā-ye-povi" was sweet, but to think "Doli" was sweeter — for it had been the vision of the goddess of the blue he had first seen in the pool of the hills; — and to him had come her symbol dancing on the ripples. He wore it in the banda about his head; — and he knew now that the image of her would never grow faint in his heart. Out of the hand of the Great Mystery had she come to him that the last and best gift of life should be known, and that the prayers to the gods be double strong because of that knowing.

Without daring to look at her he sat in silence and thought these things, and he felt that she must know what the thoughts were. The war of the elements was as a background for strange harmonies, and the low roaring clouds of darkness were but a blanket of mist under which the fire glow of two hearts be felt to shine near and clear, and send to each its signal.

Then — like a monster let loose, there were broken all bonds of the tornado on the river hills. A blackness as of night covered the earth with wide spread wings. With the voice of thunder it came; — and with the strength of a god it came.

Earth and stone were hurled on the wind as if a rain of arrows or spears had been hurled by some spirt of annihilation.

Even breath had to be fought for there,— and the maid in terror reached out her hands to the man across the sacred barrier and moaned pitifully, and in the darkness the man drew her close until her head rested on his breast, and his own bent head, and his body, sheltered her.

CHAPTER XV

THE GIVING OF THE SUN SYMBOL

TWO nights had passed over the world, and the day star was shining over the mountains of the east when the people of Povi-whah saw again Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho.

It was the sentinel on the terrace who saw him, and he was at the ancient shrine at the mesa edge, and a flame was there to show that prayers were being made to greet the god of the new day.

And when he came down from the mesa, and looked at the corn of the fields torn and beaten low by the great storm, his face showed that he carried a sad heart, and that he had gone from Te-gat-ha somewhere into the hills for prayer.

And to his house went the old men, and they listened to that which had been decided by the council of Te-gat-ha. A man had already arrived from Te-gat-ha to tell them that same thing, and to tell them that an evil spirit of the forest who spoke as a Navahu maid, had brought woe on the valley.

Some said it was the Ancient Star calling on the voice of the wind for sacrifice, and others said the tornado had come because the maid had been let go with the sacred symbols of ceremony painted on her body, and the gods of that ceremony called for her on the wind. But whichever way was the true way, the maid was linked to spirits of evil, and the corn of that year would be less than half of a full year, and the Te-gat-ha men asked that any Te-hua man

who found the evil maid would send a runner to tell of it. Robes and blue beads would be given for her: — she belonged to the god of the star, or the god of the mad winds, and on the altar with prayers must she be given to them, that they be not angry.

Tahn-té listened — and when they said the anger of the sky had come from the west, as the maid had come, he was silent.

His first day of failure in council had been the day when he shielded the Dream Maid on the trail.— The woman who had wept in Te-gat-ha had said she was evil and a witch, and now the men pointed to the killed corn as the work of her magic!

No word of his could undo these things or wipe them from the Indian mind. In his own mind he knew that a weakness had come upon him. To live alone for the gods had been an easy thing to think of in the other days, but now it was not easy, and his heart trembled like a snared bird at each plan made by the men for the undoing of the witchmaid if she should be found.

The runner from Te-gat-ha looked strangely at Tahn-té as he walked across the court, and to Ka-yemo, he said:

"You men of Povi-whah are good runners always, and your Ruler of the Spirit Things has left you all behind always in the race. Yet this time, to come from Te-gat-ha, he stays two sleeps, and follows a trail no man sees!"

"In the hills he has been for prayers — so the old men say," replied Ka-zemo. But Yahn, whose ears were ever open, gave stew of rabbit to the Te-gat-ha runner and asked many things, and learned that the storm had washed away all tracks of feet, but that the witch maid had certainly run to the south —

every other way was under the eyes of the sentinel on the wall. By a little stream to the south had her tracks been seen but not in any other place.

"Tahn-té crossed over the trail," said Yahn and laughed. "The priest of the men of iron say that Tahn-té is a sorcerer,— who knows that he did not bury owl-feathers or raven-feathers on the way to hide her trail? If the witch maid was a maid of beauty, is he not already a man?"

The man laughed with her, but he had heard of the dance of Tahn-té to the ancient stone god of the hills! The man who danced there was not the man for the cat scratches of Yahn the Apache, and though he laughed with her because she was pretty and a woman, he was not blind to her malice, and the meaning of her words went by him on the wind.

But the thought once planted in the mind of Yahn did not die. The face of Tahn-té held a trouble new and strange. He walked apart, and the old men said he made many prayers that the Great Mystery send a sign for the going of the white strangers.

In her heart Yahn thought as Tahn-té thought. The eyes of the man of the priest gown went like arrows through her at times — he looked like a man who knew all things. To Ka-yemo he talked until she was wild with desire to know the things said between them. It angered her that Ka-yemo was flattered by such attention. Padre Vicente she hated for his keen eyes and his plain speech of her. Don Ruy and the boyish secretary had too many moments of laughter when her name was spoken of to Juan Gonzalvo — as it often was! Their gifts she took with both hands, and did the talking for them as agreed, but she sulked at times even under their compliments, and Don Diego instructed Säh-pah to strive that the

unruly beauty be brought within the Christian fold.

The success was not great, for Säh-pah was brave in a new gift of silver spurs — worn on rawhide about her neck, for it was the time of the Summer dance when the women choose companions, and love is very free. If the man prefers not to share the love of the dame who makes choice of him — he makes her a gift — or she chooses one.

The pious Don Diego had the secretary give many lines in the "Relaciones" of this strange custom where the fair fond ones offered marriage — or accepted a gift as memento. He even strutted a bit that the poor heatheness offered to him what best she could afford in exchange for the divine grace of a good sprinkling of holy water. But Yahn said things of the baptism not good for ears polite, or for the "Relaciones," and Säh-pah scuttled back in fear to her new master, and told him,— and told Juan Gonzalvo, that the veins of Yahn Tsyn-deh must be cut open to let out the Apache blood, before they could hope she might be one of the heaven birds in their angel flock!

But Säh-pah did not tell them that the thing of torment awaking Yahn to wrath had been the knowledge that Ka-yemo was somewhere across the mesa, and the old people laughed that he could not stay longer from the new wife, but had gone to seek her in the place of the old ruins.

After that, divine grace had not shielded Säh-pah from vituperation, and when Juan Gonzalvo came wooing, Yahn told him that across the hills was a woman waiting for a man, and dressed in fine skins and many beads: — when he or his men had won Koh-pé the daughter of Tsa-fah, to come back and tell her. She did not mean to be won easier than the other, and without a price!

Which was also a novel statement for the truthful record of the adventurers, and the secretary, on a terrace above, heard it, and rolled on the flat roof in laughter, and wrote it down most conscientiously. By such light matters was the dreariness of waiting days lessened.

For plainly the days were to be of waiting. All the good will of gift-bought friends helped the strangers not at all to the finding of the trail of gold. In the sands of the streams some fragments no larger than seeds of the grass were found, and in the cañon of Po-et-se some of the adventurers dug weary hours in the strange soil where the traces are yet plain of black ashes, and charred cinders far beneath the sage-brush growth of to-day.

But while the Te-hua men gave good will for their digging, yet more than that they could not give, for the reason that no more than two persons could hold in trust that secret of the Sun Father's symbol — and only certain members of the Po-Ahtun order knew even the names of those two people.

After much patient delving had Ka-yemo learned that this was so, for the thing was not a tribal matter, but a thing of high medicine in the Po-Ahtun order. Not even the governor knew who held the secret. When the time came for certain religious ceremonies, some of the yellow stone was placed on the shrine of the weeping god with other prayers, but it was a sacred thing, as was the pollen of the corn, and no man asked from whence it came. To be told meant that the person told was made guardian until the death blankets wrapped him. It was a great honor. No man could ask for it. A brother might not know that his brother was the keeper of the trust. Only

the head men of the secret order of Spirit Things could know.

In vain Juan Gonzalvo swore, and Padre Vicente used diplomacy and made wondrous fine impression as the ambassador for the king of all Spain and the Indian Island!

Don Ruy took the secretary and Yahn Tsyn-deh, and went to the governor of Kah-po where his reception was kindly, but the information given him was slight.

That dignitary told him that his men of Mexico might dig great caves if they chose in search for the yellow metal of the sun symbol, but that to Povi-whah had been given the secret of the gold at the time when Señor Coronado had burned the two hundred men at the stake in Tiguex. All the old men knew that gold was the one thing the men of iron searched for. Before that time all villages had men who knew where it was hidden by the Sun Father. But a council of head men had been called. It had been a great council and long. At the end of it, one village was chosen, one order of that village, and two members of that order, and in the ears of those two alone was whispered the hiding place. No man could know who the two keepers of the secret might be, for it had to do with sacred things and with strong magic, and in that way did the villages decide to guard the secret of the High Sun.

"No chance here for whispers of courtiers and king's counselors to get abroad in the land," decided Don Ruy as they mounted their horses for the home ride and Yahn lingered to gossip with neighbors. "In the south the conquerors could fight for gold and win it — but in this land of silence with whom is one to fight?"

"Need you the gold so much that you must come between these poor people and their god in the sky?" asked the secretary doubtfully, for the attitude of the two had been of extreme politeness and not so much of comradeship since that morning of confession when the lad had owned himself a deficient page in the bearing of love messages,—"Is the finding of the gold a matter of life or of death?"

"It pays for most good things," stated Don Ruy. "How know you that I do not beggar myself on this expedition? And to go back with empty hands would win little of favor for me from even the well-guarded Doña of the Mexic tryst."

"You forget, Excellency," said the lad and smiled, "she is called mad you know — and to a mad maid you might return in a cloak of woven grasses, or of shredded bark, and lack nothing of welcome."

"Humph! Only to a mad maid dare I return coatless, and find an open gate? And suppose it be another than the gentle maniac whom I seek? — a cloak of grasses would be a sorry equipment to cover my failure."

"There is one right good blanket at your disposal," said the lad looking straight out across the river, yet feeling the color mount to his hair as Don Ruy regarded him keenly and then clapped him on the shoulder.

"I'll claim half of the blanket when the day comes!" he declared —"and in truth I'd not be so sorry to see the maid of your discourse whether mad or of sanity. That ever restless Cacique who strives to bar us out, shows me that more than one Indian may have gone mad in the same struggle. Think you he must know the keepers of the secret of gold?"

"It would not be strange, since he is the head of the magicians and the worker of spirit things."

"God send that Juan Gonzalvo gets not that idea strongly in his mind — it would be the cap sheaf to the stack of his grievances."

"And it would be the one to weigh most heavily with his reverence the padre"— added Chico. "His soul is set on treasure for the Holy Brotherhood — and to win in secret where Coronado and the church failed with all the blare of trumpets, means that no man in the Indies would have a name written above that of the patient and devout Padre Vicente."

"You say things, lad, with a serious face; — but with a mocking voice," commented Don Ruy. "Tell me truly if the life of a page in the palace of the Viceroy teaches you so much of politics and holy orders that you combine the two and grow skeptic to each?"

"A page sees more than he understands —" returned the lad, "it was the teaching of your mad Doña of the silken scarf who saw things as the priests told her they were not to be seen,— she it was who taught me to laugh instead of doing penance."

"And she it was also no doubt who taught you of magic Mexic things in keeping with the fairy Melissa of Charlemagne's day, and Merlin the magian of Britain?"

"Heigh-ho! It is precious magic those old romancers did tell of!" agreed the lad. "Think how fine it would be if we had those enchanted steeds and lances,— and the fair daughter of the Khan of Kathay for company through the wilderness!"

"She was too fickle, and too much the weeping fair," decided Don Ruy. "Bradamante the warrior

maid is more to the fancy — she would fight for the lover she loved — or against him as the case might be, yet give love to him all the time! She was the very pole-star of those old romances — but they make no such maids except in books!"

"Not so much pity for that," commented the secretary. "Since she was too easily won for the hearth stone of a plain man. It is clearly set down that she spoke with her pagan lover but once, and fell straightway so deep in love that she would fight either Christian or Moor to find the way to him. A maid like that looks well afar off, but it would take a valiant man to house with her!"

"How know you aught of how many times eyes must meet — or words be said ere love comes?" demanded Don Ruy — "Bantam that you are! — Must a man and a maid see summer and winter together ere the priest has work to do?"

"Alas — and saints guard us! — we need not to live long to see denial of that!" said the secretary and shrugged and smiled. "But since a maid close to my own house throws lilies to strange cavaliers, it is not for me to make discourse of ladies light-of-love!"

"Light-of-love! — Jackanapes! You know not so much after all if you get that thought cross wise in your skull! My 'Doña Bradamante' (for as yet neither you or the padre have given a name to her!) the 'Doña Bradamante' spoke no word the most rigid duenna could have frowned down! If you are her foster brother you might have gathered that much of wisdom to yourself!"

"But — your Excellency — she has never scattered wisdom broadcast on any one of us! An elfish maid who needed guard of both duenna and confessor: —

how was a mere friend to know that a love of a mad moment would have made her a wonder of wisdom and discretion?"

Whereupon Don Ruy suggested that he go to the devil and learn sense, and added that if the famous magic steed, or ring of invisibility were to be found in the desert regions of these Indian provinces, he would use them for a peep into the palace of the Viceroy, or the nunnery of the Doña of the Lily. No ambassador would he trust. For himself he would see how much or how little of madness was back of the message of the blossom, or the guerdon of the silken scarf.

"If I were indeed a worthy page I would make a song of your enchanted — or demented Doña, and pipe it to you to the tombé of the medicine workers on the roofs," declared the lad in high glee that Don Ruy again spoke with frankness to him.

But his excellency put aside the offer, content to make his own songs when there was a maid to listen.

"Dame Yahn Tsyn-deh might listen — and even make herself beautiful for you."

"The Dame Yahn is like enough to make trouble without the singing of songs! Whether it is the Indian war capitan, or our own, I know not as to the favorite. But some game she is playing, and I doubt if it is for Juan Gonzalvo, despite his gifts."

Padre Vicente and José were walking apart under a group of the white limbed cottonwoods, as the two riders drew near the village. Their discourse was earnest, and the voice of the padre was heard in decision.

"That is how it must be, José —" he said. "You have found the way,— the gold is as good as ours!"

"By the faith!"— said Don Ruy swinging from

the saddle to join them; "if this be true let us fill wallets and break camp for Mexico! — there is a gentle maniac over there with whom I would fain hold hands once more — this womanless paradise pleases me little!"

The padre regarded him with tolerance, and never a blink of the eye to denote remembrance of any gentle maniac in particular. Since the dame had served a worthy purpose, forgotten was all the episode!

"It is well you know the good tidings of José," he said —"though there is no hint that the gold is piled in bars waiting for the lading. Speak, José."

"It is a man of Ni-am-be," said José "He has been outcast for a reason. He lives alone, and the fear of the alone is growing in him, for he is old! He was one of the men who made medicine to forget where the sign of the Sun Father hides in the earth. But the medicine was not good medicine."

"He does not forget?"

"He made a vow to the sky to forget, but the sky did not listen and take the vow. He does not forget."

"And he will show the place?"

"It may be he will show the place. He asks me if it is a good life to live with your people, also if you would take him away when you go."

"Oh — ho! — he fears what would happen if he was left behind after telling — he fears they would kill him?"

"Not so much of the to kill is he afraid. He was a medicine man. He knows what the other medicine men could do. He would wish for the to die many

times and they would not let death come near to his cave in the rock."

"By their magic?" asked Don Ruy.

"By their magic, Excellency. Of all the head men is he afraid, but of Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho who has the sight of the dark is he much afraid."

"The sight of the dark?"

"It is so, some men are born into the world with it. They know the thought of the other man,—they see the hidden things. Tahn-té has the strong medicine and the eyes to see. He is much afraid of Tahn-té the Ruler."

"You see the power of these necromancers with their satanic arts?" said Padre Vicente. "We must make it plain to these people that such fear is to be driven out only by the true church and the power of its saints."

"If we wait for the gold until we teach them all that, the profit of this journey will be to our heirs and not to ourselves," decided Don Ruy. "Pay the renegade for the secret he should have forgotten, take him along with us, and convert him at your leisure. In all good time, and with a larger guard of men, you can come for the further conversion of the tribe."

"There is wisdom in what you say," replied the padre, "for converts here will mean a waiting game. But once let us take to Mexico the golden proof of the wealth in this province and there will be eager troops and churchmen in plenty to cross the deserts and defend the faith. But for that devil-possessed Po-Ahtun-ho the road to success would be shorter."

"It is not good luck to say things against the man of strong magic," stated José. "Ka-yemo, the war

capitan would like if Tahn-té had never come from the land of the Hópitû — but Ka-yemo says no evil words of Tahn-té — he knows that Tahn-té has ears to hear far off, and eyes to see in the dark."

"Do you forget you are a Christian soul?" demanded the padre. "The holy saints can kill the evil powers even in the sons of Satan! Let me hear no more of the 'eyes of the dark;'— pagan trickery!"

José said no more, but it was easy to see that the veneer of foreign ritual had made little impression on the Indian mind. He feared all the devils of the Christian hell, and most of the gods of the pagan pantheon. A policy of propitiation towards all the unseen powers is the wise and instinctive attitude of the primitive mind. He slipped his prayer beads through his fingers as taught for prayer, but to be quite certain that evil be bribed to keep its distance, he stealthily scattered prayer meal as he walked behind the others, and Yahn who was coming behind them, saw him, and laughed. She was glad of heart to see that the Te-hua, after years of the white man's religion, was still at heart, a devotee of the Sun.

"He says that Tahn-té the Ruler has not the strong magic," he said lowly to Yahn —"but no one else says so in this land."

Yahn did not care to discuss the power of Tahn-té — it was a bitter thing in her days.

And as the little group went on through the fragrant sage and the yellow bloom, Tahn-té himself stood almost on their trail, but a little to one side where a knoll was.

Still as a thing of stone he stood there. His hand shaded his eyes while he gazed across the sage levels

— across the water of the river and to the yellow and red sands beyond.

Even at their footsteps near, and their voices, he made no sign and wavered not in his gaze. Don Ruy glancing at him saw that his expression was keen, yet incredulous. So strange was it that Don Ruy instinctively turned in his saddle to see the thing at which Tahn-té looked and frowned.

At first he could see only the wavering lines of heat across the level — and then he saw the thing, and with a word halted the others and pointed.

Out of the red and yellow sand and soft green patches of the desert growth a group of men were outlined against the low hills. Indians with lances and with shields.

"That is a curious thing," said Don Ruy. "They walk this way yet their steps bring them not closer! Is it a war party?"

Yahn gave one look, drew her breath sharply, and turned speechless to Tahn-té. José after a long look crossed himself many times and gripped the sleeve of the padre.

"Navahu!"— he muttered, the terror of his ancient first captors coming over him. "Navahu to battle!"

But Tahn-té made a little gesture to reassure the startled interpreter.

"You do not see men alive there," he said,— "these are not men, but the shadows of men who will come."

"Shadows?"— the tones of the padre were contemptuous.

"Spirit people of the shadows — these things do come to some eyes, some days, in our land," stated

Tahn-té quietly. "This time you have also been given to see that these things are."

Even as he spoke the mirage of the armed men faded in a whirl of sand caught up by a wandering wind, and while the others still stared at the place where it had been, Tahn-té passed them and ran with easy stride across the levels to Povi-whah.

The Spanish crossed themselves, and even Yahn Tsyn-deh trembled. Tahn-té had chosen to show the men of iron that his medicine was strong to bring visions, and what was most wonderful — to bring them before the eyes of other men!

José was shaking with fear.

"All things he hears," he muttered —"all things! Under the trees we spoke words — far off they reached his ears! He waited to show us that his eyes were for the dark or the day — or — the *dead!* The spirit men were Navahu. Holy Father, he can bring all the men who ever died to tramp us into the sand! Holy Father, my heart is very sick!"

The others were silent. All were awed, and Padre Vicente was thinking what was most wise to say. There were enough in the group for strong witness that Tahn-té had shown them a thing which did not exist; — only a sorcerer could call up men out of the earth and send them away on the wind!

"In the sorcery we had no part, my children," he said at last. "The man who raised those demons fled, as you see, at the sign of the cross! To-morrow morning we have a mass. It is well to walk in prayer, when Satan works with his chosen helpers."

Don Ruy looked at him sharply — for the mirage could not be a thing of wonder for so travelled a man. But his was not the task to correct eminence as to natural or infernal agencies, and the effect on the

minds of the two interpreters might prove a thing of grace!

Therefore he bent his head, and rode onward, and smiled at the secretary, who was careful to ride close, and showed none too much of courage at this glimpse of the magic of the barbarian who clasped hands with the gods — or the demons!

"What dare be written in the "Relaciones" of a thing like that?" he queried.—"You smile, Excellency, as if you carried a magic shield, or enchanted sword lifted from pages of old romance, but what think you Señor Brancadori will say to this thing of wonder? It does not belong to the living world we know."

"Let it not get into your dreams," suggested Don Ruy —"or if you do, content yourself with the fancy that I indeed bear a magic shield and am ever near enough for you to hide behind it."

"I am not so much a coward!" retorted the lad, —"to die for a good cause in any human way is not a thing to fear — but these magical works —"

"Without doubt they do belong to the sorcery of Satan," said Don Ruy soberly, yet with an eye on the padre —"and yon supple racer is of course one of his heirs. Stay you close to me, lad, and forget not you orisons."

When they reached the camp, a herald was calling to the people from the terraces. He was calling for all the men to prepare for battle. In a vision of the bright day had Tahn-té seen the coming of the Navahu. The medicine of Tahn-té was strong. Not at home would they wait for battle. To steal women had the enemy taken the trail to the dwellings of the Ancient ruins in the hills, and there must the warriors prepare to meet them on the trail.

The names of men were called as scouts, and the response was quick, as one after another ran to the kiva for orders, and then started on the run towards mesa and forest.

Don Ruy looked after them with eyes perplexed.

"Does the Cacique regard the mirage with earnestness?" he said to the padre who also watched and listened. "The man has a quick, good brain and marvellous understandings,— but to prepare for battle because of a sun picture in the sand is scarce what I looked for in him."

Padre Vicente smiled with his lips, and stroked his beard.

"You have yet to learn that the Indian magic workers let no tricks go by to prove their greatness," —he said. "That wench and José were witness to the thing — thus he must claim it as his own! When the scouts find no Navahu warriors, be sure it will be for the reason that the magic of the sorcerer caused them to turn back in weakness on the trail!"

"That will but strengthen his power, if it be so," agreed the younger man,—"and how will you surmount that fear of him, and win the renegade of Ni-am-be to give the word we need?"

"Protection and a life of ease away from the Indian magicians is a good bribe for an outcast,— and it may be that fortune plays into our hands. I could wish that the Cacique would follow the scouts with his mummeries and incantations. You see how they have taught even José the fear of him!"

"Yes — I do see, and but for the story that in this one village is held the gold secret, I should say to move camp to some province where bookish caciques hold no sway. How account you for the keen brain of this wonder-worker? We have pampered and

tutored numbskulls in Seville who know not even their own creed so well as it is known by this heretic barbarian."

"Without doubt it is the power of the Prince of Darkness," and Padre Vicente gave the opinion with all due force — having in remembrance that scene of the gift of the rosary in the kiva, and seeing clearly that the Spanish adventurer had more than a little of admiration for the unexpected daring of the pagan.—"Witchcraft and sorcery are of the Devil, and both white men and savages do trade their souls for evil knowledge. To strip him of his ill-gotten power would be a work of grace for the Faith — and it is a thing for which each Christian should gladly say many prayers!"

Don Ruy well knew that these ardent words were directed at his own luke-warmness in regard to the young Ruler. Maestro Diego and Juan Gonzalvo had distanced him in setting a good example to the men of the guard!

A messenger from the kiva approached and spoke to Yahn, and she came to the Spaniards with a message.

A council was in the kiva. It was about war if war came. The Po-Ahtun-ho thought it was good that one of the white visitors be asked to sit and listen; Don Ruy was invited to be that one. The man José was to interpret.

Don Ruy speculated as to the cause of this courtesy. The Ruler certainly did not desire the help of the white men — the message did not even say as much. But it was plain that there were two parties on that question, and Tahn-té meant to show no fear of his opponents. They would see he gave them fair chances.

So he went, and José followed, and Yahn watched them — to her great, yet silent rage.

Ka-yemo only reached the village as the last scout was started for the trail of the Po-et-se cañon. Ka-yemo was the official for the war orders, yet the orders had been given without speech with him! Over his head had it been done, and his protest to the governor, and to the old men in council brought him little of pride or of comfort.

"On the trail to see your wife you might have died," said one of the old men,— "or on the way coming home. How could we know? If you die and we have to fight — we have to fight without you. Before you were born we fought without you."

"I was not to see a wife!" protested Ka-yemo. "I can stay away like other men. Some one has talked crooked! I was on the mesa talking with the guardians who make the arrow heads. To the far away ones I talked. The women send word to them that they are afraid. A ghost is at Puyé. All the women but the Twilight Woman are much frightened. They want men."

"Good!" said the governor. "The scouts are already on the trail. If men are needed, each man is ready and each spear is waiting. To the Po-Ahtun-ho has been shown a vision of the enemy — it was not a time to wait for council."

Ka-yemo's handsome face was still sulky. The vision of Tahn-té might have waited. He had come down with a fine new story of a ghost seen in the ruins of Puyé, and it was ignored because Tahn-té the Po-Athun-ho had found a vision!

Tahn-té entered not at all into the discussion of the confiscated rights of Ka-yemo. Even of the ghost frightening the women he asked no question.

Many things of war were talked of if the Navahu should come to steal women or corn, and the dusk of the twilight crept after the vanished sun when Tahn-té turned at last to the war chief.

"Ka-yemo, with the men of iron you have spoken much and often," he said quietly. "Do you know who told them first that in Povi-whah was held the secret of the yellow metal for which they search?"

The tongue of Ka-yemo became stiff as all sat silent waiting for his answer.

"The padre asked me,"—he said at last,—"the padre always makes people speak — I told the padre that which I had heard."

There was a slight stir among the men, but Tahn-té quieted them with a glance.

"The priest of the iron men has also been told one other thing," he continued —"and it is well for you all, brothers, that you hear this thing. Oh-we-tahnh, the outcast of Ni-am-be, was a strong medicine man. He used magic in a dark way for evil. His power was taken from him. He was told by the council to forget the secret of the sun symbol. Brothers, he has not forgotten! He has come to the camp of the men of iron. He eats their food: — last night he slept by their walls."

"Our brothers of Ni-am-be will not be glad with us if we let this be," stated one man. "The evil magic must be outcast always."

"Send some one and find the man," said Tahn-té. "When the sun of to-morrow comes, all who listen here may be on the war trail. It is not good to leave a coyote loose to do harm when no one watches."

In a little while the outcast was brought into the circle. He cringed with fear, and his eyes were restless as those of a trapped wolf. The governor ques-

tioned him as to his presence there, reminding him that the council of Ni-am-be had granted him life only if he take that life out of sight of his kind. Why then did he come to Povi-whah and stay in the camp of the strangers?

His only reply was that he would go now, and he would go quickly.

"No — not quickly," said Tahn-té. "You will not go quickly any where ever again. I am looking at you! I say so!"

The man stared at Tahn-té like a bird that was under a charm. All the others saw the steady gaze of Tahn-té, and saw also that the outcast began to tremble.

"Hold out your hand," said Tahn-té, and when it was done, Tahn-té took from his medicine pouch some pieces of yellow gold. They were heavy, he passed them around until all might see, then he put the gold in the hand of the outcast.

"Your clan was a proud clan and good, and you made them ashamed," said Tahn-té. "You had strong medicine and you used it for evil until your name must not be spoken by your brothers. To these men of iron you would trade that which is not yours: Without speech of council you would do this — and to do it would be traitor! Because your heart wishes to give the sun symbol to these strangers, I send you to them with what your hand can hold. To the priest of the white god give it! Tell him I, the Po-Ahtun-ho, send it, and no more than that will he ever see here in Povi-whah. Tell him that the weight of it makes your hand shake and your body shake. Tell him that the sickness is now in your blood, and when the day comes again your tongue cannot make words to tell him things. Tell him if

his men put you in the saddle, or carry you to the hidden place of the Sun Father, that the light of your eyes will go out on the trail! I am looking at you! — and you, who once had a name, and were a worker of magic, know that I look on you with Power, and that it will be as I say."

He stooped and drew in the ashes of the place of fire, the figure of a man with hand stretched out, then, with a breath, he sent the ashes in a little cloud and each line was obliterated.

"To destroy you would not be good,"— he continued. "It is better that the boys and the young men see the fate given to a traitor. My brothers,— is this well?"

"It is well!" said the men, but the voice of the war chief was not loud, and his hands shook until he clasped them together and held them steady.

Tahn-té looked around the circle as though undecided, and then rested on Ka-yemo.

"You speak the words of the Castilian man, and like to speak them," he said quietly, "so it will be well for you to make the words for this man who carries to their priest the gift of the sun symbol. Forget no thought of it — for all the words have meaning."

And this speech to Ka-yemo was in Castilian, and was plainly said, and Ruy Sandoval knew then why the courtesy of the council had been extended to him.

And the outcast, holding the nuggets in his trembling outstretched hand shook so that he could not go alone up the ladder to the world above.

Ka-yemo, with a still, strange face of fear, put out his hand to help the outcast, who looked as if Great King Death had called his name.

No more words were spoken, and the men in silence

followed after. They had seen a thing of strong medicine, and the Great Mystery had sent power quickly. That palsy by which the man had been touched had come with the swiftness of the wind when it whirls the leaves of the cottonwood. They all knew that the tongue would be dumb, and the eyes would be blind in the given time if need be.

And Don Ruy like the others, was touched with awe of the man who had wrought the thing. As he went up the ladder he looked back at the Ruler who sat still — gazing into the ashes of the place of sacred fire.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRUE VISION

THE sentinels on the terrace who watched the night in Povi-whah knew these were nights when they did not watch alone. The Po-Ahtun-ho was abroad in the night for prayer, and when they made reports in the morning, they knew that he had not waited for such reports ere being wise as to each shining path of a bright spirit sent earthward by the Great Mystery,— or each shadow passing over the Mother of the Starry Skirt, or the nearness of the visiting Ancient Star to the constellations on its trail to the twilight land of many days.

They knew he was watching the world overhead. With the Pin-pe-yé, that mystic compass of the Milky Way, was he balancing the fate of things as written in the light of the Sky Mother whose starry skirt was a garment to which departed souls cling. So many are the souls of earth people that their trail makes luminous the white way of the sky, and all the world, and all the people, can of course be seen from that height of the sky, and when a dart of heat lightning sped earthward to the west, the sentinels cast prayer meals and knew that Those Above were sending messages to Tahn-té who prayed as no other prayed.

And on the heights were his prayers, for ever it was to the mesa and beyond that his trail led since the mighty wrath of the wind by which the corn was broken to earth. The darkness was often running

from the dawn ere he came downward from the hills into the valley.

A scout, speeding eastward from the mountains in the dawn saw him coming down from the ancient place of the Reader of the Stars in Puyé — the sacred place where no other reader of the Sky Things goes in the night. The Lost Others are known to abide there, and mourn the barren field of the older day.

At times strange magic circles the ancient dwellings of the cliff. Before a storm, light flickers like fiery butterflies above the fallen walls on the summit.

For this reason was it deemed holy, and for this reason were the women of Shufinne much afraid when the ghost of a woman was seen plainly there between the edge of the cliff, and the silver disk of the moon.

The scout carried this word, and Tahn-té who had been seen coming from prayers there, listened, but gave little heed; — the women had seen shadows, and the older men said they were only weary that the men were so far across the mesas. Fire out of the sky, or out of the earth, had often danced on those heights, but no woman had been there in a ghost form ever in the memory of men.

Much more were they intent to know of any trace of warriors on the hills, but only smoke had been seen far beyond the place of the boiling water of the hill springs, and the smoke could easily be of Ua-lano hunters. Other scouts were yet to come. They had made longer runs. This man had been told to return at dawn of the day.

So the word went abroad, and in the Castilian camp, Don Diego gave fervent thanks. He was none too well pleased that to secure records for the "Relaciones" it might be necessary to carry a spear

ONE GIRL WAITED AT THE PORTAL

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against the heathen. It had been plainly understood in far off Mexico that the people to be visited were not a hostile people. They were to be found waiting for salvation, and with good gold to pay for it!

The offer of the padre to give aid in battle to their Indian brethren, had been but a courteous pleasantry when uttered. It was a different matter when scouts were sent abroad by the pagan Ruler to seek trouble and bring it home to all of them!

Trouble enough was he brewing by that gift to the padre of the sacred sun symbol. The pariah who brought it was under the curse medicine of Tahn-té. Before their eyes he sat dumb, and the Castilians crossed themselves with dread as they looked on him. He was the visible warning of a doom awaiting any other who dared speak!

Not alone could he lift water to his own lips. The trembling of his hand was now the trembling of his entire body. By order of Tahn-té he was to be taken to one of the little cliff dwellings at the foot of the mesa. Each seven suns, an old man and a group of boys were to have the task of carrying to him food and water, and each visit the boys were to be told by the Ancient why the medicine had been put upon the outcast. Thus all youth would know that the Great Mystery sent power against traitors.

In vain Padre Vicente tried to scoff at the reality of it, or the continuance of it. The men pointed to the palsied man, and prayers were remembered by many who were not pious. Indian witchcraft was not to their liking!

"Paracelsus with his necromancy has done nothing worse!" declared Don Diego. "This barbarian priest lacks bowels in his devilish art! Had he not sent the gift of gold, the aggravation would have

been less pointed. That insult from the heretic is not to be endured."

"Yet the saints do give us strength for the endurance, Señor," replied the secretary, "and Don Ruy paces apart, and keeps key on his thoughts since that council. Think you he fears magic of the Po-Ahtun-ho?"

"A good thing were it true!" decided Don Diego —"overmuch is he inclined to countenance their pagan practices, and find likeness in their mummeries to the mysteries of the Greek — and even the Egyptian of ancient days! The sorcerer has snared him with that ungodly learning of books. But while we see it, and know it, Chico my son, it is as well that the thought enters not into the 'Relaciones.' Don Ruy in the desert is a good comrade, but his Excellency in Madrid could nip any book in the bud — even the most stupendous."

"He is so great in power?"

"He is — but it is enough to know that he is the darling of princes, and has not yet been ignored by their sisters! That which he wants in Madrid comes easily to his hand,— and this wild adventuring is unprofitable madness."

"Not unprofitable shall it remain," decided Padre Vicente, who had walked near enough to hear their converse, and whose interest was ever alert to further knowledge of their patron.—"Let the heathen sorcerer send what insolent message he will, it does not change the fact the gold has been put into our hands. It is clear proof that the story of the Indian mine was a story of truth."

"Strange it is that the abhorred Teo the Greek should have been the one to carry word of it out to the world"— mused Don Diego. "Write down in

the ' Relaciones,' Chico, that the ways of the saints are often wondrous peculiar in the selection of evil instruments for pious works."

" Yes, Señor, and shall I write down also that the piety has not, up to this date, made so much progress as devout minds could have hoped? "

" You may do so," conceded Don Diego —" but fail not to give the true reason. Had these poor stubborn barbarians not sent their women away, the padre would have won many souls for the faith ere this. Women are the instruments through which religion reaches men. Not until the women have been frightened back to their homes can we hope for a comforting harvest of souls."

" There is one soul waiting to be gathered with the harvest," said the lad, pointing to the outcast. " If Christian prayers could lift from his shaking hands the pagan doom, it would not do more to make converts here than wordy argument."

" The governor and the head men approve of his sentence because the man made camp here without the word of council," stated Padre Vicente. " It is not well to meddle with their Pueblo laws."

Yahn, who listened, saw the smile on Chico's face, and wondered why the lad should be humorous because the priest did not venture to measure saintly prayers with heathen medicine!

Glad enough she was that it was so, and eager she was that some one should tell to Ka-yemo that his new friends had a weaker god than the god of the Te-hua people,— even the medicine of Tahn-té — the medicine of one man — made them respectful!

But her own lips were sealed between anger and jealousy. Like a sullen figure of fate she had brooded during the days of strange changes. Sullen

also she listened to speech of sorcery, and speech of war if war came.

To go to battle was the one way by which Ka-yemo could dominate and make the men of iron see there was another than Tahn-té in Povi-whah. This thing she thought of by day, and dreamed of in the night.

She heard his name on the lips of the old women and of Säh-pah, again they talked of the day when the father had been left behind by the warriors to pull weeds in the corn!

Like a chained tigress she walked the terraces and heard their laughter, but no word did she say. If once their laughing words had been said to her, she felt she would kill Säh-pah!

And Ka-yemo gazed at her with burning eyes afar off — yet looked the other way if by chance they passed each other in the court of the village. It was true he started over the mesa to Shufinne where the new wife waited with the other young women and the girl children, but midway on the trail the thought of Yahn and Juan Gonzalvo had come to him — and he had turned in his tracks, and the new wife of the many robes, and wealth of shell beads, was not seen by him.

Phen-tza the governor said hard words to him that his actions made laughter,— and that he went about as in an angry dream, and that the warriors asked who was to lead if the day vision of Tahn-té proved a true vision!

"I did not see the vision of Tahn-té," retorted Ka-yemo —" the people to whom he made it clear of sight, say it was across the river to the sunrise — why then does Tahn-té ask for scouts running to the sunset hills? That is new medicine."

"The council asked that thing while you were yet on the mesa," said the governor patiently. "The people who saw the vision of Tahn-té saw only the spirit form of Navahu warriors," and the governor puffed smoke from his pipe to the four ways to propitiate the gods for the mention of those who belonged in the spirit land. "But before the vision was carried away by magic of the wind, Tahn-té saw more than the others, he saw a dream mountain behind them — and cliffs and a mountain pass that is known to his eyes. Through that pass they were coming, and the pass is beyond the sacred mountain to the land of the hunting ground of the sunset. By that trail he knows they come — or they will come!"

"You think the vision of Tahn-té is clear, and his medicine good!" said Ka-yemo —"But the men of iron are wise also. They call him — sorcerer."

"It is not yet the time to say it aloud," warned the governor. "This is a time of strange things, and our eyes saw that which came to the outcast who carried the sun symbol to the men of iron. The medicine of the white men is strong, and they could be good brothers in battle,— but not yet has their man of sacred medicine shown magic like that," and he pointed to the outcast waiting and shaking in the sunshine against the wall of the village.

Ka-yemo knew by these words that even his own clan watched him closely — Tahn-té had made the jealous hearts afraid.

Yahn saw him go alone to the river's edge, and sit long alone; his handsome head was bent in thought and to no one could the thought be told. From the terrace Yahn watched. It was a time when the war chief should call men and see that bows were strong, and lances ready. It was not a time to walk apart

and be unseen of the warriors. One man, who fastened a scalp to his lance for good medicine, talked with Säh-pah, and the woman laughed and asked who would pull weeds in the corn if all men went seeking the Navahu!

When Yahn Tysndeh heard that, she went down from the terrace into her own dwelling, and made prayers to her own gods of her Apache people. With a blade of obsidian she made scars until the blood dripped from her braceletted arms. To the divinely created Woman Without Parents, she chanted a song of prayer, and to the Twin Gods who slew enemies, she let her blood drop by drop fall on the sacred meal of the medicine bowl: — all this that one man be given power — and all this that a Te-hua clan be not ashamed in the sight of gods!

Through the words of her prayer she heard the hurry of feet, and the shrill of voices, and past her dwelling tramped men of iron clanging the metal of their arms, and the voice of Chico was heard calling her name at the door, telling her the scouts had found the Navahu camp: — to come quickly to Don Diego. Tahn-té had read aright the magic of the vision of the sand and the sun!

And Yahn Tsyn-deh slipped shell ornaments over the wounds on her arms, and went out to make words for the Christians.

CHAPTER XVII

THINGS REVEALED ON THE HEIGHTS

ALL the Castilians but Padre Vicente and Don Diego went with the warriors to the western heights. For reasons of his own, the padre preferred the pueblo when freed of the influence of Tahn-té, and Don Diego preferred to bear him company,— a secretary could well look after the records of warfare, if it came to warfare, though for his own part he believed not any of the heathen prophecy of the coming of warriors, and wondered much that his eminence, the padre, showed patience with their pagan mummeries. He assured the padre that it would be a wrong against Holy Church to grant the sacraments to the pagan Cacique until that doom of the outcast had been revoked; — To take the power of high God for the managing of pueblo matters was not a thing to grant absolution for! And Padre Vicente, to quiet his anxiety on that score, agreed that when the pagan Cacique came for absolution, he should be reminded of his iniquity.

And while they settled this weighty matter, the young Ruler who had prophesied, moved contrary to custom, with the leaders across the high mesa, and was followed by the Castilian horsemen, in their shining coats of mail, and on a mule led by Gonzalvo rode Yahn, unafraid, and with proud looks.

And ever her eyes rested on Ka-yemo who held his place of chief, and chanted a war song, and was so handsome a barbarian that Don Ruy made mention

of it, and told the secretary that he was worth an entire page of the "Relaciones," even though not a thing of war came in their trail.

The great white cliff of a thousand homes of the past, filled the Castilian mind with wonder. Generations had lived and died since the ghost city of the other days had throbbed with life, still the stucco of the walls was yet ivory white, and creamy yellow, and it looked from the pine woods like a far reaching castle of dreams.

It was nearing the sunset, and a windless heat brooded over the heights where usually the pines made whisperings, clouds of flame color hung above the dark summits of the mountain, and the reflected light turned the ghostly dwellings to a place of blood-tinged mystery. More than one of the adventurers crossed themselves. Don Ruy said it looked, in the lurid glow, like a place of enchantment.

"But there are beautiful enchantments," said Chico —" and this may be one of them! Think you we might find walls pictured by Merlin the magian if we but climb the steep? Magic that is beautiful should not be hedged around by a mere ocean or two!"

"This is the place of the ghost woman," stated Yahn,—" and Shufinne, where the women are afraid, is beyond."

Within sight was Shufinne, and there the Castilians had expected to camp. But among the older Indians there had been talk — and who can gauge the heathen mind?

"Two camps will we make," they decided. "Here is most water for the animals and here our white brothers can wait; at Shufinne will the Te-hua guard be awake all the night, and give warning if

the enemy comes,— other guards will watch the trail of the cañon. Thus we cover much ground,— no one can pass to the villages of the river; — and quickly can all camps help the one where the enemy comes."

"Not so bad is the generalship in spreading their net," said Don Ruy.

"Nor in excluding the stranger from the hiding place of their pretty maids," added Chico with amusement. "Ysobel — ride you close to me. This is the place where they herd their women, and guard them,— and you are not so ill favored in many ways as some I have seen."

Ysobel whimpered that it was not to follow war she had left Mexico and her own people, and like Don Diego she could see no good reason to search for trouble in the hills.

"Then why not stay behind safe walls with the padre?" asked Don Ruy, and Ysobel went dumb and looked at Chico — and the lad shrugged and smiled.

"Has she not married a man?" he queried, "and does not the boy Cupid make women do things most wondrous strange in every land? José would fare as well without her watchful eye, but no power could make her think it,— so come she would on a lop-eared mule despite all my fine logic!"

"You — yourself — would come!" retorted Ysobel, "so what —"

But Chico prodded the mule so that it went frisky and sent its heels in the air, and but for Don Ruy the beast might have left the woman on the ground.

"What imp possesses you to do mischief to the dame?" he demanded —"and why laugh that she follows her husband? When you have more years

you may perhaps learn what devotion may mean!"

"Never do I intend to strive for more knowledge of it than I possess at this moment!" declared Chico —"see to what straits it has led that poor girl, who, but for this matter of a man, would have been good and safe working in a convent garden. Small profit this marriage business is!"

"A selfish Jack-a-napes might you be called," remarked Don Ruy, "and much I wonder that the woman bears patiently your quips. Give us ten more years, and we'll see you mated and well paid for them!"

"Ten years!"—and the lad whistled,—"let me wait ten of my years and I can wait the rest of them!"

"Name of the devil!" laughed Don Ruy—"if you grow impatient for a mate, we'll charge yon citadel and capture one for you!"

"Oh, my patience can keep step with your own will, Excellency," retorted the lad. "I've no fancy for halting the expedition, or of making a winning through another man's arms."

"Your conceit of yourself is quite up to your inches," observed his patron. "When you've had a few floutings you'll be glad to send signals for help."

"One flouting would be enough to my fancy — I'd straightway borrow myself a monk's robe."

"We all think that with the first love affair — or even the second —" volunteered Don Ruy —"but after that, philosophy grows apace, and we are willing to eat, drink — and remain mortal."

Ysobel giggled most unseemly, and Chico stared disapproval at her.

"Why laugh since you know not anything of such philosophy, Dame Ysobel?" he asked. "It is not given many to gather experience, and philosophies

such as come easily to the call of his Excellency."

The woman hung her head at the reproof, and his Excellency lifted brows and smiled.

"You have betimes a fine lordling's air with you," he observed. "Why chide a woman for a smile when women are none too plentiful?"

But they had reached the place of the camp, and the secretary swung from the saddle in silence. Don Ruy watching him, decided that the Castilian grandfather must have been of rank, and the Indian grandmother at least a princess. Even in a servant who was a friend would the lad brook nothing of the familar.

Tahn-té stood apart from the Spanish troop while camp was being made, and a well dug deeper in a ravine where once the water had rippled clear above the sand. The choice of camp had not been his. The old men and the warriors had held up hands, and the men of iron were not to see the women at Shufinne,— so it had been voted.

The lurid glow of the sky was overcast and haste was needed ere the night and perhaps the storm, came. Since it was voted that Puyé be the shelter, Tahn-té exacted that only the north dwellings be used — the more sacred places were not to be peered into by strange eyes!

A Te-hua guard was stationed at the ancient dwelling of the Po-Ahtun. Near there alien feet must not pass. Where the ruins of ancient walls reached from edge to edge of the mesa's summit, there Te-hua guards would watch through the night, and signal fires on Shufinne mesa would carry the word quickly if help was needed.

A Navahu captive from Kah-po came with men of Kah-po, and was left at Puyé. Juan Gonzalvo

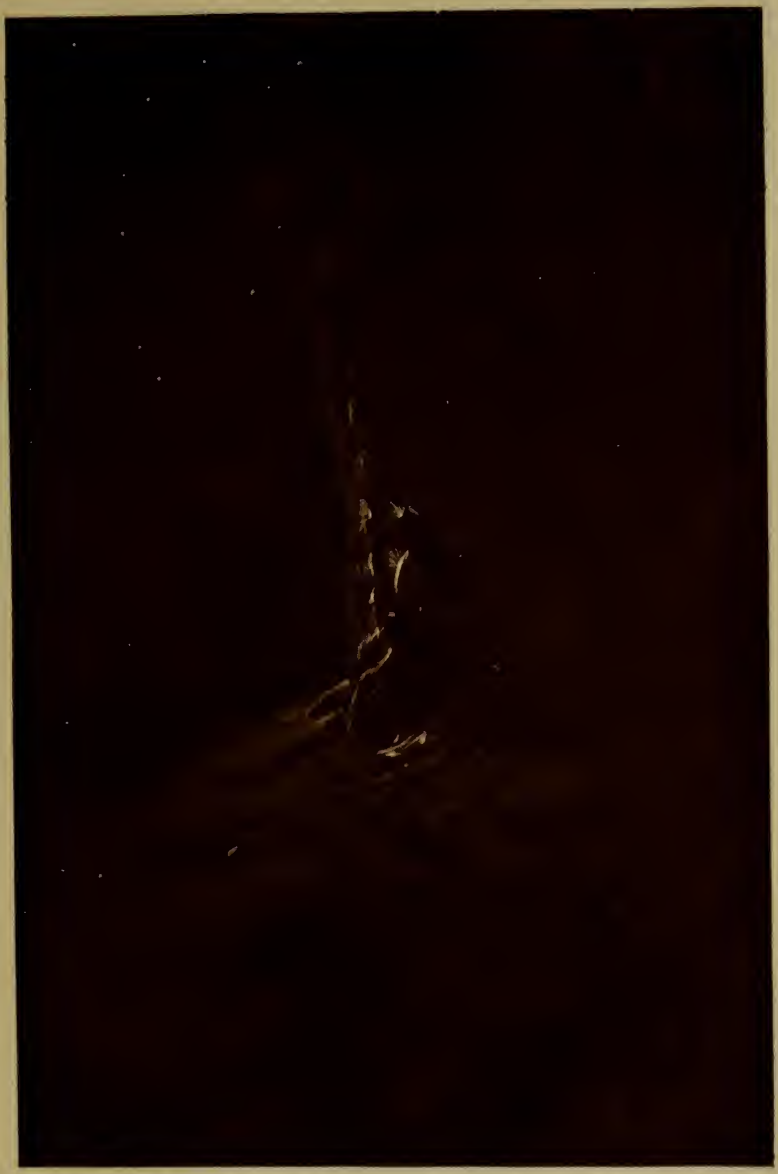
stationed his own guards, having no fancy for sleep with only painted savages between his troop and danger. Ka-yemo for no stated reason lingered near, and watched the Castilians, and watched Yahn Tsyn-deh; — so sullen and strong had grown his jealousy that here in the hills — apart from the padre, he dared think what could be made happen to the little cluster of white men if the Kah-po men would join Povi-whah for battle,— and if —

Under the eyes of Padre Vicente no such thought would have dared come to him,— but he had brief wild desires to win by some stroke, a power such as Tahn-té held without question. Let the Castilian whisper "sorcerer" ever so loudly, yet the old men of Te-hua would give no heed without proofs — and who could make proofs against Tahn-té?

The words of the governor had cut deep — and Yahn who was of the Tain-tsain clan, would rage if the clan gained not credit by the war chief,— and Gonzalvo the man of iron,— would then take her to himself — and — He walked apart in rage. From the ancient dwelling of the Po-Ahtun he could hear the chanting of a war song. Tahn-té was invoking the spirits of battle — Tahn-té it was who had seen the vision of warriors and started scouts to the hills; — on every side was he reminded that Tahn-té the priest — was looked upon as Tahn-té the warrior heart!

The Castilians would go back to their own land with that word to their people, and to their king; — and he, Ka-yemo,— would have no mention unless it should be of the weeds pulled in the corn!

His heart was so sick and so angry that he could almost hear the laughter if he returned without honors: — but one man should not laugh! — He did



In Castilian War Dress He Stood

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not know how it would happen that he could have the Capitan Gonzalvo killed — but that man should not laugh with Yahn Tsyn-deh!

In his sick rage he had brooded and walked far. Along the summit of the mesa among the ruins had he walked to the east. The weird dead city of the Ancient Days was made more weird by the strange brooding heat of the dusk. No cool air of the twilight followed the setting sun this night. Sounds carried far. No fires were lit in the camp below — yet movements of the animals told him where the Castilians tethered their wonderful comrades of the trail.

At any other time he would not have walked alone on the heights where mystery touched each broken wall, and wrapped the mesa as in a strange medicine blanket. But in his impotent rage he felt spirit forces of destruction working against him, and the dread of them dulled his senses as to the place where he wandered.

And then his heart jumped with a new fear as the form of a woman arose from a crevice in the stone wall — did the ghost of the ruin wait for him there?

The figure halted uncertainly and then ran toward him with outreaching hand.

It was Yahn Tsyn-deh, and she was half laughing and half sobbing, and the barrier of anger was brushed aside as if it had never been.

"Ka-yemo! — Ka-yemo!" she whispered —"You dare be highest now; — and Tahn-té will be under your feet, Ka-yemo!"

She clasped her arms about him as she stumbled, breathless, at his feet, and his hands clutched her in fierceness.

"Is this a trick?"— he asked. "Have I trapped

you with a lover, and you run to me with a new game?"

"Oh — fool, you!" she breathed —"There was but one lover, and he went blind, and walked away from me at a daybreak!"

She would have said more, but he caught her up and held her too close for speech, and she felt in triumph the trembling of his body.

"The man Gonzalvo,"— he muttered —"I was walking to find the way I could kill him alone because you wear his gifts."

"Fool!" she whispered again. "Shall I then go to a woman at Shufinne and kill her because her gifts are with you? I let her live to see that the gifts she brings are little beside my own! I bring you victory over Tahn-té the sorcerer of Povi-whah! I bring you the trail to his witch maid of the hills. With her he comes to make prayers in the night time! For this he guards the dwellings of the star where she is hidden. Tahn-té the sorcerer shall be under your feet! Ka-yemo — I bring this to you!"

And while they clung to each other, scarce daring to think that union and triumph was again their own, Tahn-té the Ruler of magic sat within the ancient dwelling where the symbols of the Po-Ahtun are marked on the walls even in this day.

In a shadowed corner a tiny fire glimmered, and by its light he studied the clear crystal of the sacred fire-stone. With prayer he studied it long, and the things speaking in the milky depths held him close, and the breath stopped in his body many times while he looked, and the prayers said through the Flute of the Gods were prayers to the Trues to which he sent all his spirit.

Then from his medicine pouch he took the seeds

of the sacred by-otle into which the dreams of the gods have ever grown as the blossom grows.

Darklings were these, gathered when the moon was at rest, and no wandering stars swam high in the night sky. The dreams in these shut out day knowledge, and the knowledge of earth life. For medicine dreams they shut out all of a man but that which is Spirit, and the body becomes as a dead body knowing not anything but dreams — feeling neither heat nor cold.

Of all medicine left on earth by the gods who once walked here, not any medicine is so strong to lift the soul to the Giver of Life even while the feet walk here over trails of thorns, or the whipping thongs cut bare to the bone the dancing flesh of penitents.

When Tahn-té had listened to Padre Luis, and had read of the grievous pain of that one Roman crucifixion of the founder of the church of Padre Luis, the boy had not been impressed as the good priest had hoped. Even then he had heard of the medicine drugs of different tribes, and the Medicine Spirit granted to some, and as a man he knew that the man to whom the gods give medicine gifts can make for himself joy out of that which looks like pain. He knew well that the earth born who drew to themselves God-power, do not die, and the man on the Roman cross could not die if his medicine Power of the Spirit was strong. He knew that he had only gone away as all the god-men and god-women have gone away at times from earth places.

He knew that strong magic of the spirit could always do this for a man if his heart was pure and steady, but not to another could he give the spirit power, or the heart of knowledge.

He counted over the seeds of the By-otle and knew

that there were enough to make even a strong man dream of joy while under torture.

After that he dared look more closely into the shifting lights of the sacred fire stone, and the Castilians in the camp below, and the guards on the level above, and the plotting woman, and her regained slave and master heard the call of the Flute, and intonings of sacred songs from the century old dwelling of the Po-Ahtun.

" The battle is here!
The battle of gods is here!
The flowers of shields have bloom,
The death flowers grow!
Among that bloom shall homes be made,
Among the bloom shall we build fair homes.
Brothers: — drink deep of warrior wine,
For our enemies we build homes!
Eat: — eat while there is bread.
Drink — drink while there is water.
A day comes when the air darkens,
When a cloud shall darken the air,
When a mountain shall be lifted up,
When eyes shall be closed in death,
Eat — eat while there is bread,
*Drink — drink of warrior wine!" **

* Book of Chilan Balam.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BATTLE ON THE MESA

THE stars had marked the middle of the night, and the Castillian camp slept, save for the guards who paced quietly through the pine groves, and the Te-hua sentinels on the summit above, who rested in silence at the places where foot-holds carved by pre-historic Lost Others in the face of the rock wall, afforded a trail for the enemy if the enemy could find it.

Between the Castilians in the pine below, and the Te-hua sentinels on the rock mesa of the ruins above, there stretched the line of cave dwellings high in the rock wall. These needed no guard — for there the Te-hua warriors slept, and Tahn-té read the fate of things in the crystal, and made prayers.

But to the east where he had forbidden wandering feet, a man and woman did crouch in a crevice, and watch while the shining ones overhead travelled to the center of the sky and then towards the mountains in the trail of the sun.

For Tahn-té they watched — and the watching was so long that the man slept at intervals in the arms of the woman — but the woman did not sleep! Victory was too near — and triumph beat in her blood, and like a panther of the hills waiting for prey did she listen for the steps of the man who had known her humiliation.

But when the steps did come, they came not from the Po-Ahtun-ho, nor were they the steps of a man.

A woman crept lightly as a mountain squirrel from one to another of the boulders on the eastern hill, and at last climbed to the dwellings of the Ancient Ones, and reached the portal of the sacred place of the star.

This was the place where the wise men of old watched the coming of the gods as they gazed upon earth through the mask of the glimmering stars. It was not a place for women, for no woman had been Reader of the Stars within known records of the Tehua people. Yet it surely was a woman who crept upwards in the night to the place where women feared to go.

Yahn Tsyn-deh slipped like a snake from the crevice and watched from the shadow of a rock, and was richly repaid. It was the Woman of the Twilight who came to the place where Tahn-té had forbidden the Castilians and warriors to walk, and against the sky Yahn could see the outline of a water jar borne on her back by the head-band of woven hemp. She halted for breath, and leaned, a frail, breathless ghost of a woman, against the wall.

Then with a pebble she tapped on the portal of the star, four times she made the signal ere another met her in the dusk, and took from her the burden, and clung to her hand in dread.

In the dusk of the starlight they sat and whispered, for no fire dare be lit within, and the girl of the bluebird wing ate the bread and drank water, and breathed her gratitude while she strove to understand the words of the mother of Tahn-té.

That there was danger she knew for she had seen the many men. Like things enchanted had she seen them — the men who looked like part of the animals they rode! In dread and fear had she waited for Tahn-té while she watched the Ancient Star glowing

like an eye of wrath in the western heavens. It was looking back with an evil look because no gift had been made to it on the altars of the valley people. Tahn-té had told her that so long as it shone must she remain hidden. She did not need to ask why. When with the Navahu savages she had been taunted at times because the altars of her people knew well the blood of human sacrifice which they offered with elaborate ceremony to propitiate the gods of the stars in the sky.

"Tahn-té?" she whispered to the mother, but the mother shook her head. Apart from all woman-kind must a priest live when times of stress come. Tahn-té was fasting and making prayers. A girl hidden in the caves must not go hungry, but the thought of her must not mingle with thoughts of penance for the tribe. All heads of the spiritual orders do penance and make prayers for clear vision when the evil days come.

"And they are here?" questioned the girl.

"They are here. The land was smiling, the corn was good, all was good. Then the Great Star came — and the men of iron came — the corn was laid low by the God of the Winds. The Most Mysterious has sent signs to his people, and the signs are evil and come quickly. My son, the Po-Ahtun-ho, has seen these signs, and the gods have talked with him."

The maid knew that a mere stray creature could not find room in the thoughts of so great a man — at so great a time; and she sat silent, but she reached out and held the hand of his mother. Since he could not speak with her he had sent to her the woman most high and most dear. He could not come, but he had not forgotten!

"He will come again?" she murmured, and some

memory in the heart of the Twilight Woman made her speech very gentle.

"He will come again when the battle is over, and the days of the purification are over. It is the work of the Po-Ahtun-ho to see that the stranger is ever fed and covered with a shelter. So has he brought you here, and so has he brought the lion skin robe to you here. When the young moon has grown to the great circle, and the strangers have gone again to the camp by the river, then will the Po-Ahtun-ho come to you here in this place. He will come as the circle moon rises over Na-im-be hills. Many prayers will be made ere that night time, and he will come with wisdom to say the thing to be done. Until then the strangers must not see you, and the young foolish men of our tribe must not see you."

Not much of this was understood by the bewildered maid who must be kept hidden in secret even in the land of her own people.

But Yahn Tsyn-deh, crouching in the sand outside the portal, heard and understood, and her heart was glad with happiness, for a vengeance would fall double strong on Tahn-té if it touched also the medicine god woman, his mother!

From the broken, whispered sentences — half Navahu — half Te-hua — did Yahn know that the hidden woman was indeed the Navahu witch maid by whom evil spirits had been led from the west into the great valley.

It had been a wonder night in the life of Yahn Tsyn-deh. The love of her wild heart had been given back to her — and vengeance against his rival had been put within reach of her hands! The heights of Puyé were enchanted — and the Ancient Star had shone on her with kindness. It was a good

time in her life and she must work in quickness ere the change came, for the watchful gods of the sky do not stand still when the signs are good signs.

And she crept back to the arms of her lover, and they watched together the medicine shadow woman creep downward until the dark hid her.

Yahn counseled that at once they go to the governor and tell that which they heard, but Ka-yema said "no," for if the Navahu enemy did come, the power of Tahn-té was needed by the Te-hua warriors — it was not the time to kill the witch woman or kill the prayer thoughts.

"You are strong to fight without Tahn-té," whispered the girl who made herself as a vine in her clinging clasp of him.

"But not to fight against Tahn-té and his secret powers of the sky," answered Ka-yemo. "The old men know he is strong in visions. When the time comes that he fall low in their sight, there will be many days that their hearts will be sick. We must not make these days come when we have enemies to fight."

"Do you fear?" demanded the temptress petulantly. It irked her that his first thought was of caution — while hers was of annihilation for the man who loomed so large that no other man could be seen in the land.

"If you think I fear would you find me here in this witch place with you?" he asked. "It has been forbidden that any one comes here — yet have I come!"

Plainly he felt brave that he had defied the Po-Ahtun-ho in so much as he had walked to the forbidden sacred places, and Yahn felt a storm of rage sweep over her at the knowledge. But it had been

a storm of rage like that by which he had once been driven away from her! And she smothered all the words she would have spoken, and clung to him, and whispered of his greatness,— and the pride he could bring to the clan when Tahn-té, the lover of witches, no longer made laws in the land.

In her own heart she was making prayers that the alarm of the Navahu warriors prove a false thing, and the vision of Tahn-té be laughed at by the clans. To hear him laughed at would help much!

But that was not to be, for ere the dawn broke, came shouts from Shufinne — and signal fires, and the Te-hua men of Puyé ran swiftly to guide their Castilian brothers in arms, and the savages who had hoped to steal women in the darkness, found that thunder and lightning and death fought for the Te-hua people — and the men of iron rode them down with the charméd animals and strange battle cries.

When the daylight came there were dead Navahu on the field south of Shufinne — the flower of the shields had bloom! Two dead Te-hua men were also there, and a wounded Navahu had been taken captive by Juan Gonzalvo. Ka-yemo carried two fresh scalps, and Don Ruy lay huddled in a little arroyo, where a lance thrust had struck him reeling from the saddle, and Tahn-té had leaped forward to grapple with the Navahu who, hidden on the edge of the steep bank, waited the coming of the horseman and lunged at him as head and shoulders came above the level.

Where the breastplate ends at the throat he struck, and the blade of volcanic glass cut through the flesh. At the savage yell of triumph the horse swerved — stumbled, and with a clatter of metals rolled down the embankment.

As the Navahu rushed downward with lifted axe and eager scalping knife, an arrow from the bow of Tahn-té pierced the temple of the savage, and with a grunt he whirled and fell dead beside the Castilian.

The horse had quickly regained his feet, but the rider lay still, the blood pulsing from his throat and staining the yellow sand. With dextrous fingers Tahn-té removed the helmet and breastplate that the position of the body might be eased. With sinew of deer from his pouch, and a bone awl of needle-like sharpness, he drew together the edges of the wound, then turning to where the Navahu lay prone on his face in the sand, he deftly cut a strip of the brown skin a finger's width across, and in length from shoulder to girdle; this he took from the yet warm body as he would take the bark from a willow tree, and bound it about the throat with the flesh side to the wound.

"Take my horse and follow," whispered Don Ruy, who had recovered breath and speech,—"I am not yet so dead that I need the grave digger — you can ride — take my horse and follow."

Tahn-té had leaped to the saddle, when a cry at the edge of the arroyo caused him to halt, it was so pitiful a cry, and tumbling down through the sand and gravel came Master Chico with staring eyes of fear, and lips that were pale and quivering. The flayed back of the savage had he caught sight of, and the white face of Don Ruy who looked dead enough for masses despite his own assertion to the contrary, and the lad flung himself on his excellency with a wail that was far from that of a warrior, and then slipped silently into unconsciousness.

With the thought that a death wound had struck

the lad who had come to die with his master, Tahn-té turned the face back until the head rested on the arm of the Castilian, lightly he ran his hands over the body, and then halted, his eyes on the face of Don Ruy, who gazed strangely at the white face on his arm. The cap was gone, the eyes were closed, and the open lips showed the white teeth. In every way the face was more childish than it had ever appeared to him — childish and something more — something —

Then Tahn-té, who held the wrist of Chico, laid it gently on the hand of Don Ruy.

"Only into the twilight land has she gone, Señor," he said softly —"even now the heart beats on the trail to come back — to you!"

Don Ruy stared incredulously into the eyes of the Indian, and a flush crept over his own pale face as he remembered many things.

"Doña Bradamante!" he murmured, and nodded to Tahn-té, who leaped on the horse and rode where the yells of the victors sounded in the piñons towards the hills. Beyond all the other horsemen he rode, and saw far above in the scrubby growth, the enemy seeking footholds where the four-footed animals could not follow. Then, when Ka-yemo had called the names of the trailers who were to follow the enemy beyond the summit, Tahn-té the Po-Athun-ho turned back and chanted the prayer of a prophet to whom the god had sent true dreams.

The Castilians watched him as he came; so proudly did he carry himself that the men swore an army of such horsemen would win half the battle by merely showing themselves, and the old men of Tehua knew as they looked on him, and as they counted the slain and wounded, that Tahn-té had indeed been given the

gift of the god-sight to save the women of the valley.

Juan Gonzalvo swore ugly oaths at sight of the horse of Don Ruy. Since the pagan had taken it as his own, it was plain to be seen that some woeful thing had chanced to his excellency.

But to their many questions Tahn-té led them to the arroyo where Don Ruy was indeed wounded, and where a pale secretary was carrying water in his hat to bathe his excellency's head, and his excellency let it be done, and exchanged a long look of silence with Tahn-té, who understood.

The ankle of Don Ruy had a twist making it of no use to stand upon. The Po-Ahtun-ho made a gesture to Chico to hold the horse while he, with a soldier to help, put it straight with a dextrous wrench, and the secretary several paces away, turned white at the pain of it.

Then was his excellency helped again to his saddle, and the men from Mexico marvelled at the surgery of the pagan priest who killed and flayed one man to mend another with.

CHAPTER XIX

THE APACHE DEATH TRAP

WHEN the runners carried the word to the river that the vision of Tahn-té had been a true vision, the padre and Don Diego stared at each other incredulous. It was a thing not to be believed by a Christian. Yet the runners said that many Navahu scalps and two dead Te-hua men witnessed the truth of it, and the men of iron had proven indeed brothers in the time of battle. The governor made thanks to Don Ruy, who was wounded, and his Excellency had sent the secretary back to camp with Ysobel since there was not anything new to record. The Te-hua men would dance the scalp dance when they came to the village, and two clans mourned for men left dead on the mesa meadows.

The padre regretted that he had not gone with the troop. Since they had won honor and thanks, it was the good time to work for the one favor of the gold in return.

And Don Diego regretted the Te-hua men who had died without absolution.

The secretary stated that the clans of the dead men were clamoring for the Navahu captive taken by Gonzalvo, and there was much talk about it. Also that the Navahu said it was one maid they came searching for — a Navahu maid who wore bluebird wings — they had not thought to harm Te-hua

women! Of course the Te-hua men thought that was a lie, for the Navahu always wanted more women.

But the old men of the village to whom it was told looked at each other with meaning.

It was a strange thing that the men of Te-gat-ha to the north, and the men of Navahu from the west, took the trail to search for that one maid of mystery. The ground over which she passed had reached far, and the evil wrought by her had been great. The wise men of Te-gat-ha knew that the tornado followed her trail, and the Navahu men who searched for her, had found death and defeat. Prayers must be made against the evil of her if her feet should cross the land of the Te-hua people.

And all through the long beautiful twilight the tombé sounded from the terraces, and the mourners for the dead on the high mesas knew that prayers were being made against new evil — and that the medicine men would in an early day demand penance and sacrifice of many if the cloud of dread was not lifted from their hearts.

Four days of purification must be observed by the warriors ere entering again their home village after a battle to the death. And Yahn could not by any means approach Ka-yemo during that time, which did not prevent her speech with other men. To Juan Gonzalvo she talked, and Gonzalvo chafed under the restrictions of Don Ruy. Steadily in his mind had grown that thought of the parentage of Tahn-té. He was unwilling to think that the native mind could have the keenness and the logic of this barbarian whose eyes were the the color of the darkest blue violets, and whose diabolic power made even the Castilians awe-struck, and sent them to prayers more swiftly than did the sermons of the padre. If he

only dared hint it to the padre — if by some god-given power he, the insolent Cacique, could be delivered into their hands — if as the son of Teo the Greek, he could come within the law of the Inquisition for his devilish heresies — the all too lenient Inquisition demanded white blood in its victims — what a triumph it would be for the Faith to add the sorcerer to the list! For such a triumph would Gonzalvo have been willing to tread with bared feet all the sands of the trail to Mexico.

With such pious intent did he question much of Yahn, who knew little — and was indeed afraid when the medicine god woman was asked of. She had seen that which had come to the outcast of Na-im-be who would have told tribal things, and she had no wish to grow dumb, or blind, or a trembling wreck in the time of one sun across the sky.

But she did go with him to the place of the well in the sand at Shufinne at the time when the Twilight Woman went for water. He waited there and drew for her the water, and watched closely her face as he spoke a Castilian word of greeting. If he had hope that she had ever before heard such words his hopes were fruitless. She was so indifferent to his presence that not even once did she lift her eyes from the water jar or look in his face, and the fragile figure turned from him and walked away as if Castilian warriors were seen daily on the path to that well.

Yahn knew that all the other women wished greatly to be let go down to the village that they might see and be spoken to by the great strangers, and she hid in the brush to watch the medicine god woman and even won courage to ask of her who had filled the water jar so quickly.

"Was it not then the stranger who is your lover, Yahn Tsyn-deh?" asked the other, not as one who cares, but as one who states a fact —"the man whom you give love to in these new days."

"Who says I give love?" demanded Yahn. "Sah-pah the liar, or Koh-pé, who knows not anything!"

"You walk together alone as lovers walk. The other women do not think they lie."

"They are fools — the other women!" stated Yahn —"also they are liars. They are glad if a man of the beard looks the way they are,— they would make a trail to follow if the men of iron whistled them,— they would be proud to make their own men ashamed — they!"

For the first time the older woman looked in the face of the girl with intentness, as though suddenly aroused to interest in the human drama about her, and the actors in it.

"Then you would not follow, Yahn Tsyn-deh?" she asked. "The others say you laugh at the men of the tribe and give love to the strangers — they say you pass Ka-yemo on the trail and your eyes never see him any more because of the men of iron who give you gifts!"

"A jealous woman says that!" stormed Yahn Tsyn-deh,— "a woman who maybe lies to him when he will listen! You see this:"— and she picked up a black water worn pebble with a vein of white through the heart of it —"Sometime when the Earth Mother was beginning with the work, these two were maybe not together like this. They were apart — maybe it was before the ice went from around our world and the mountains sent fire to split the rocks. Look you now — you are wise, but maybe you do

not know how this is, for you go into shadow lands, and men and women, and the stones over which your feet walk, are all the same to you — also the love of a man and a woman are not anything to your thoughts!"

The other looked at her, and beyond her, and said nothing. The words of Yahn were words of angry insistence on the thought she had never yet been able to express — and to say it to even the god medicine woman who sheltered a witch, was to speak it aloud, and have it forgotten!

"You are wise in medicine craft but do you know how this grew?"— she demanded —"I know — I feel that *I know!* — the mountain fire or the sky fire broke it that the white stone of fire could be shot like an arrow into the heart of it. To keep some count it was made like that by the Most Mysterious; — and in the hand of the Mystery it was held — and the hand was closed over it while the mountains came down to the rivers, and the rivers made trails through rock walls. When the hand was opened and the sun looked on it, it was grown into one; — can you with all high medicine put them apart? — can you break the black and leave the white not broke? Can you make two colors of the powder you would grind from it between grinding stones? — Yet the two colors are there! Like the two colors are Ka-yemo and Yahn Tsyn-deh. One they were made by some magic of the Great Mystery, and no woman and no man, and no lies of women, can break them apart! When you hear them lie another time, you can look at this stone, and know that I said it!"

She had worked herself into such a passion that the long smothered rage against the women who spoke her name lightly in the village spent itself on the one

woman of all who lived most apart from such speech. But aloud had Yahn Tsyn-deh said once for all that her life was as the life of Ka-yemo, and that no earth creature could make that different, and for the saying of it aloud she was a happier woman.

And Gonzalvo who listened to her defiance, fancied that the silent woman of mystery had given her chiding, and that Yahn was doing wordy battle for the new Castilian friends.

All the more could he think so when Yahn joined him with her great eyes shining like stars, and braided in her hair some flowers he had plucked for her — and walked back to the camp with him openly before all men!

And she said to him; —"I like only men who fight,— men who are not afraid. Tell your priest who does not like me that now is the time to speak again to the council of the sun symbol and of brothers. The old men have seen that your fighting was good, and that it saved them their women. This will be the time to speak."

"But their proud Cacique —"

"It is a good time to speak —" she insisted — "else will Tahn-té grow so tall with prophecies that his shadow will cover the land, and the men in the land,— tell your priest that the shadow has grown too tall now for one man. Other men have fought well and taken scalps — yet only one name is heard in your camp — the name of Tahn-té who sees visions in the hills!"

He wondered at her mocking tone of the visions in the hills, for no other Indian mocked at the visions of the sorcerer.

Don Ruy was well agreed to get back to the fair camp by the river, and so pleased with them were

their new comrades in arms, that he was amused to see more than one dame of the village trudging homewards across the mesa: — they forgot to doubt the new allies who had helped send the Navahu running to the hills. When he reached Povi-whah he rallied Chico that he kept close to the camp and found so many remembered records to put safely down the "Relaciones," when there were more than a few pairs of strange dark eyes peeping from the terraces.

But Chico had quite lost the swagger of the adventurous youth since he tumbled down the arroyo bank almost on top of the flayed savage. The fainting fit need not have caused him so much of shyness, since his Excellency had also apparently indulged in the same weakness; — for Chico on awaking had carried two hats full of water and drenched his highness completely ere he had opened his eyes and again looked on the world. However, without doubt that fainting fit of Master Chico's had taken away a fine lot of self confidence, for ink-horn and paper gave all the excitement he craved. His audacity was gone, and so meek and lowly was his spirit, that Don Diego had much pleasure in the thought that the vocation of the lad was plainly the church, and that sight of the dead, unconfessed barbarians, had awakened his conscience as to human duties for the Faith.

This interesting fact he made mention of to Don Ruy, who bade him god speed in making missionaries out of unexpected material,— and got more amusement out of the idea than one would expect, and Don Diego hinted that it was unseemly to jest at serious matters of the saving of souls when his own had stood so good a chance at escape through the hole in his neck.

"It may be that I found a soul through that same

wound," said Don Ruy, "at least I gained enough to make amends for the scar to be left by the wicked lance."

"It is true that the knowledge gained of their savage surgery is a thing of import for the "Relaciones," agreed Don Diego,—"but only the infidel Cacique made practice of it, and his acts are scarcely the kind to bring a blessing on any work — I have been put to it to decide how little space to give his name in these pages. It is not a seemly thing that the most wicked should be the most exalted in the chronicles of our travels."

"Whether exalted or not he must be again considered in this quest of the gold," stated Padre Vicente, "Gonzalvo brings me word that more than one of the tribe would have joy in his downfall, and that it is the good time to talk with the head men openly on this question. Our men have helped fight their battles: — thus matters have changed for us. Many of the women are allowed to come home — they perceive we are as brothers and are not afraid."

"They also perceive that we have a Navahu war captive whom they desire exceedingly for use on the altar of the Mesa of the Hearts,"— observed Don Ruy. They are much disturbed for lack of a sacrifice these days. They say the Ancient Star will send earth troubles until such sacrifice is made, some of the clans must donate a member unless the gods send a substitute — their preference is for a young and comely youth or maiden. They plainly hinted to Gonzalvo that the Navahu has been given into our hands by the gods for that purpose."

Don Diego was emphatic in his horror, but the padre explained that from the heathen point of view it was not so cruel as might be thought. When the

savages went to war they prepared themselves for such fate if captured. More: — the death was not torture. The ceremonies were religious according to the pagan idea — chants and prayers and garlands of flowers and sacred pine were a part of the ritual. The blade of sacrifice must be sharp, and the heart removed from the victim quickly and held to the sun or the star behind which the angry god waited. When it was a sacrifice of much high import, it was made on the Mesa of the Hearts, and in remembrance a heart shaped stone was always left near the shrine by one of the secondary priests: — for that reason one could find many heart shaped stones, large and small on that mesa. When a medicine man found one, even in a far hunting ground, he brought it home for that purpose.

"And the body of the victim?" asked Don Ruy —"I have been on that mesa and seen no bones — what becomes of it?"

"If it is trouble of floods or storm or drouth, the victim is thrown to the god of the river below. On the mesa to the west is an ancient circle of stones with the entrance to the east. The ordinary sacrifice is made there for good crops, and the body is divided until each clan may have at least a portion which he consumes with many prayers."

Don Diego confessed that such ritual sat ill upon even a healthy stomach, for his own part the open air seemed good and desirable, and he was of a mind to return whence they had come, rather than risk longer unauthorized visits among such smiling soft voiced savages. Since his eminence had learned thus much of their horrors, who was to know how many might be left untold? — or how soon the tribes might have

a mind to circle the camp and offer every mother's son of the Christians on some such devilish altar?

Even while he spoke a curious shock ran through the men, and they stared at each other in amaze and question. Plainly the floor had lifted under their feet as though some demon of the Underwold had heaved himself upward in turning over in his sleep.

Screams and loud cries were heard from the terraces, men came tumbling up the ladders from the kivas, and Master Chico let fall a slender treasured volume of Señor Ariosto's romances and ran, white faced and breathless to Don Ruy, who caught and held him while the world swayed about them.

In truth he did not even release him so quickly as might be after the tremor had passed, but no man had time or humor to note the care with which he held the secretary, or that it was the lad himself who drew, flushing red, from the embrace of very strong arms.

"I — I feared you might not know — I came to tell you —" was the lame explanation to which Don Ruy listened, and smiled while he listened.

"I wonder what 'Doña Bradamante' would have done in all her bravery of white armor if such an earth wave had shaken her tilting court?" he asked, but the secretary did not know, and with face still flushed, and eyes on the ground, went to seek Yahn Tsyn-deh to hear if this was a usual thing that walls lifted in wavy lines — and that chimneys toppled from Te-hua dwellings.

The old people said it was long since the earth had shaken itself, and they watched closely the Mesa of the Hearts, and the mesa of the god-maid face, and a mountain over towards Te-gat-ha. If the

anger of the earth was great against earth people, then smoke would come from certain earth breathing places,— and the sentinels kept watch — and the old men watched also.

And around the village went a murmur of dire import — for it was plain that the Great Mystery was sending many signs to the Te-hua people; — the altars had been too long empty!

A strange foreboding filled the air, and the Castilians gathered in little groups and talked. To send the Navahu captive to his death at the hands of the tribe was not to their fancy, but if a member of a Te-hua clan must be offered up, who could tell what vengeance that clan might not take on the strangers?

Padre Vicente looked over all, and listened to much, and then talked to the governor: — was it not the time to take strong brothers that they share both the evil and the good together?

"The gods are certainly not well pleased with us, we make offerings and we make prayers — and the only good they let come to us has been our brothers of the iron and thunder and the fire sticks," said Phen-tzah. "Yes, I think it is the time to take brothers of a strong god."

This was the word of the governor and it was the strongest word yet given for union. But the governor made it plain that he did not belong to the order holding secret of the sun symbol. The Po-Athun were the people who must decide these spirit things. He thought the hearts of the old men of that order were kind and soft for the strangers, but — the head of that order was Tahn-té, the Po-Athun-ho!

This gave pause for thought, every man who chose to go contrary to the will of Tahn-té, found himself well nigh helpless in the Indian land, his infernal

gods were so strong that the Castilians were none too eager to flout them, only Yahn Tsyn-deh seeing the crisis of things, crept to Juan Gonzalvo and whispered,

"You hate the Po-Athun-ho — and you say love words to me. You think you want me?"

Juan Gonzalvo was a blunt soldier who had never before been kept at the distance of Tantalus by an Indian girl who took his gifts. On her brown neck a silver necklace of his shone richly, and in her braided hair corals of the sea gleamed red. While others had fled to the altars for prayers,— and sprinkled sacred pollen to the Go-hé-yahs — the mediators between earth and spirit world — Yahn had bathed in the river and made herself beautiful with Castilian gifts and barbaric trinketry.

To the man who measured her with eager eyes, she looked beautiful as the Te-hua goddess of whom she had told him — Ta-ah-quea who brings the Spring.

He told her so while he devoured her with his glances.

"Good!" she said. "You give me love, and you hate the Po-Athun-ho. You can have us both if your heart is brave this night."

His arms would have clasped her for that promise, but she eluded him and laughed.

"Your Don Kuy tells you the Po-Athun-ho must have no harm," she whispered, "but is there not among your men, one, maybe even three soldiers who are master of the bow,— and can destroy in silence?"

Gonzalvo was himself a master bowman — and had some pride in knowing it, also he could if need be, pick men of his company who had skill, and could be trusted.

"Could you send these men as if to hunt or to fish,— could you have them find the way past the Te-hua sentinels to the place where they camped in the pines?" and she made a gesture towards Puyé. "Could you secretly find your way there in the dark before the Mother Moon looks full on the face of the earth?"

"I can do this — and I can do more than this."

"Can you win for your people the good heart of the council that they show you the sun symbol?" she asked. "Only Tahn-té closes the door to you, and they fear Tahn-té. Tell me why your hate of him is strong."

"His father was the Devil. Through the devil soul he learns magic things."

"Good! You hear the wise men tell of a maid of evil who brought the tornado and the battle — and now brings this shake of the world?"

"The witch maid," and Gonzalvo crossed himself —"Yes — the men speak of her in whispers — and the Indians say a sacrifice must be made."

"It must be made," said Yahn Tsyn-deh, and her white teeth shut tight in decision. "Maybe it happens that you can make it, and win the council — how then?"

"I — make the sacrifice — I?"

"Not where the altar is," soothed Yahn as he recoiled from the thought. "But listen you! — maybe I dream — but listen! — maybe the witch maid is a human thing with the heart of magic like Tahn-té,— maybe I can find them together for you in the sacred place of the stars in Puyé. Maybe the spirit of Tahn-té has been traded into her keeping, and with the double strength of evil she will destroy the earth in this place. The stars say so; — a great evil is

She Led Him Up the Ancient Stairway

coming! The medicine men see it in the sacred vessels of water and in the clear stone of the ancient prophets — they say so! You are a brave heart — you can save these people and win the gold secret from the council. If you want Yahn Tsyn-deh for love you will do this thing!"

Gonzalvo stared at her incredulous, she was crediting him with a power that would place him high in the Castilian camp — if he could win! And more — she was to give him her own intense, glowing, restless self!

"I also hate Tahn-té,— that is why!" she said frankly, "and I love only men who are brave above all other men. Your fire sticks of thunder must not be heard on the heights of Puyé, but when Tahn-té and the witch meet there in the night, your arrows must send them together to the Afterworld — not one alone — but *together!* When the men of Tehua find the dead witch (for the men of Te-gat-ha and the Navahu can witness that it is the one!) and when they find the lion robe of Tahn-té on her body, — and other gifts of Tahn-té — and find them dead the one beside the other, then the man who has made this happen will be a great man! Even the men of Te-gat-ha will come with gifts, and the men of Tehua will give you honor, and will open the trail for you to the sun symbol. There will be no Tahn-té to put evil magic on them for doing so! When he is found dead with the witch maid they will see clearly that his magic was evil magic, and they will have breath that is deep and free again. Also I — Yahn Tsyn-deh — will walk beside you where you choose."

Low and rapid was her speech there in the shadow of the adobe wall — and so fair was the dream she

made clear for him, that he felt himself grow dazed with the glory of it — yet he was a strong man!

If it was true that Tahn-té and the witch nested together in the ruins of Puyé, he knew well that the day of the young Ruler was ended in Povi-whah, or in any Te-hua council where it was known. But the strange mental or spiritual power of Tahn-té made it a thing of danger to let him live after accusal had been made. The way of Yahn seemed the best of all ways. If he was found dead beside the maid accursed, the evidence would be clear against him — and the True Faith would have the credit for such extermination!

He knew this was not a thing to speak of to Don Ruy — and though the padre was enemy to every thought of Tahn-té — he feared even the padre — that strange man who knew so much that was hidden in Indian life, would so clearly see that Yahn Tsyn-deh was as much the motive as gain of the gold, or glory for Mother Church.

No,— it was a thing to think out alone.

Yahn pressed his hand furtively and smiled on him as he left her, and then entered her own dwelling and sprinkled prayer meal to the spirits who carry messages to the gods.

Then she sent a child for Ka-yemo and gave the child some dried peaches that he be content to stay with his fellows in the sunshine and eat them.

Ka-yemo entered her dwelling for the first time in many moons and clasped her close, and then seated himself in the farthest corner from the Apache god pictures while Yahn Tsyn-deh talked.

Her voice was low, and often she went to the opening to see that no one listened, and Ka-yemo was

wonder-struck at the greatness of the thing she whispered.

"You have won scalps in this battle — you have led the men in the scalp dance, and the people know you are strong. If Tahn-té went out of the world now, at this time, you would be strongest. This is the time he must go!"

"But if the vengeance of the Castilians came heavy?"

"It will not come heavy. Don Ruy has forbidden Gonzalvo even to speak words against Tahn-té to the padre. So it is that he would be angry if Gonzalvo sent arrows into the Po-Ahtun-ho. *You* must not do it, for his magic power might come heavy on your head. If you fear to destroy the Castilian capitan you are foolish in your thought — for it need never be known. Look! — here are arrows of the Navahu, from the place of battle I gathered many, these are the arrows for the work. Let Gonzalvo risk the magic of Tahn-té, and the magic of the witch maid, and destroy them, then you must alone, trail the Castilian, that he comes not back alive to tell how it was done! The Navahu arrows will take the blame from your head — it will be plain that some Navahu men stayed to take pay for their dead! So it will be, and you, Ka-yemo, will stand high, and your clan will be proud that no man stands more high. And I — Yahn — will be with you each step of the life trail — and each step we dare look down on all others and be proud. The songs you sing can be proud songs!"

The blood of Ka-yemo jumped in his veins at that picture of victory as drawn by Yahn Tsyn-deh. Now, since she had asked him to destroy Juan Gonzalvo

was he at last content in the thought that her love had not wandered from him, Ka-yemo! Even in the days of silence and anger had he held her spirit; — and to do that with a woman is proof that a man is strong! It made him feel there in the dwelling of Yahn the Apache, that he could do battle in the open for her with the Castilian capitan if need be and have no fear; — how much more then would he dare do the work to be done in secret on the heights!

Thus did Yahn Tysn-deh spin her web that Tahn-té and the maid of the forest be caught in its meshes, and it seemed good to her that the men of iron be killed when chance offered; — especially must the Castilian capitan not be let live to tell the clan of Tahn-té aught of how the plan was made; — and above all had she spoken truth to the Woman of the Twilight by the path to the well: — her life was as the life of Ka-yemo; — if the Castilian escaped and dared claim the price she offered — !

At that thought Yahn felt for the knife in her girdle, and had joy that the edge of it was keen as the steel of the Castilians, and her smile was a threat as she almost felt her hand thrust and twist it in the flesh of the man of iron who had dared think himself the equal of Ka-yemo!

Some savage creatures of the wilderness there are who choose their mates, and stand, to live or to die, against all foes who would break the bond. The tigress will watch her mate do battle for her and then follow his conqueror,— but Yahn Tsyn-deh had not even so much as that meekness of the tiger in her; — her own share of the battle would she fight that the mate she chose should remain unconquered. Proud she was of his beauty and of his grace in the scalp dance,— but more proud would she be when no

serene young Po-Athun-ho looked at her lover as if from a high place of thought. It was, strangely enough, the *unspoken* in Tahn-té against which she rebelled in bitterness. No word that was not gentle had he ever spoken to her — and to Ka-yemo no word that lacked dignity. It was as if the man in his thoughts was enthroned on the clouds: — and at last she had found the way for that cloud to be dragged low in the dust!

CHAPTER XX

THE CHOICE OF YAHN TSYN-DEH

AND while Yahn Tsyn-deh laid the trap, and the medicine drums sounded, and the women gathered the children close because of the trembling earth, one girl robed in the skin of a mountain lion waited alone at the portal of the star, and knelt in the shadow, and looked with eyes of fear at the great pieces of severed cliff, or ancient wall sent crashing downwards by the force of the earth shock.

Past her portal they had crashed until it seemed the roof must fall also, and she gathered the robe of Tahn-té about her, and came as far as might be into the open — and watched with longing eyes the trail across the mesa to the great river! — for that trail was as the path of the sun to her,— or the rainbow in the sky!

The feet of Tahn-té had touched that trail, and when the night came, and the moon rose in the great circle over the eastern hills — over that trail would he come, and though the mountains themselves crashed downwards to the mesa, he would hold her close, and the very spirits of darkness could send no more fear!

She kept very still there waiting at the portal, for strange noises were heard on the mesa, a dislodged stone rumbling down the long slope — or a bit of loose clay falling from the ancient walls. At times the smaller sounds suggested passing feet — and

above all things must she remain hidden from people until he came for her — he — the god-like one who had brought her to this dwelling so akin to the dwellings of the Divine Ones of the Navahu land in the place called Tsé-ye. The difference was that the Tsé-ye dwellings were deep in the heart of the world — while these dwellings were lifted high above the world.

But she knew without words that he indeed belonged to the Divine Ones ere he brought her to the ancient dwellings. That her name had been in his heart, and on his lips before she herself had told him, was but a part of the strange sweet magic of the new life into which he had led her.

Through the storms — and the dark nights — and the long days of loneliness had she lived since he had hidden her first from the scouts of Te-gat-ha — but they had passed over her as dreams of sweetness pass. — That the groves of pine, or the mesa of the river, hid him from her sight, did not mean to her that he had quite gone away, the wonderful magic wrought by him made it possible for her to feel his arms about her even when she lay alone in the darkness of the dwelling of the star. To be hidden like that, and to watch for his coming, was to be granted much joy by the gods. That the gods exact payment for all joys more than mortal, was one secret Tahn-té did not whisper to her, though the thought had clouded his own eyes more than once as he clasped her close to him.

What the gods would exact he did not know, but daily and nightly he made prayers to the mediators of the spirit land, and hoped in his heart that the god of his people prove not akin to the jealous god of the men of iron; — for a jealous god would, without

doubt, take her from him! Against men he could protect her — but if the gods awoke — and were jealous —

And he remembered the fastings, and the penance, and the prayers by which he had, unknown to all others, dedicated his life to the gods alone!

But of this he said no word — only held her more close in his thoughts — but ever a gray shadow moved beside him — the shadow of an unknown fear — and it was the same shadow by which he had been led to count over the seeds of the sacred growth — that he be sure it was in his power to make the death sleep beautiful to her, if the death sleep should shorten their trail together in the Earth Life.

She knew nothing of his fear, and watched each lengthening shadow with delight — since the growing shadows were heralds of his coming! Even the trembling of the earth was forgotten in that joy — and she scarcely noted that the air had grown strangely sultry — almost a thing of weight it seemed; — a brooding, waiting spirit, silencing even the whisper of the pines — and the whisper of the pine was sacred music to the Te-hua people; — through all the ages it had whispered, until in a good hour it had given voice to their earth-born god!

She knew not anything of the gods of her own people, and the ominous silence of the pines meant not to her what they would mean to a girl of the river villages. But the magic of the place did make itself felt to her when her robe, as she touched it, sent out little snappings as of fireflies' wings, and far across the land tiny flashes flamed from earth to sky as the dusk grew. When she shook looose her hair that she might arrange it more pleasing for his sight, she was startled by the tiny crackling, like finest of twigs in a

blaze — and to smooth it into braids silenced none of the strange magic; — each time her hand touched it, the little sparks flashed — under the heavy brooding atmosphere, electric forces were at work in strange ways — and on the heights of Puyé they have for ages been proof of the magic in those mountains.

Therefore is it a place for prayer.

Startled by the strange earth breathings, the girl crept within the portal for her waiting — and the dusk was too deep for sight across the rolling land of ancient field, and piñon wood far below.

Had she kept the watch she might have seen more than one figure approach the heights from different ways — only a glimpse could be had, but through the dusk of piñon groves certainly two figures moved together, a man and a woman, and even before them one man stole alone from the south, and halted often as if to plan the better way of approach.

The man and woman skirted the foot of the mesa, and crept upward on the side to the north.

"It is the hard way to climb you have come," said the man, and the strange heavy air caused them to stop for breath, and as she reached to cling to the hand of the man, he drew back with a gasp of terror. As their hands touched, a little electric shock ran through each,— it was plain they had reached the domain where the witch of evil powers held sway.

"It is not I whom you need fear," said Yahn Tsyn-deh,—"it is the witch maid of Tahn-té, and we have come to see the killing."

"And if — if Gonzalvo grows weak on the trail — or if his men take fear from this evil magic of the mesa of Puyé?"

"No other men come with him — we talked — we two! Alone he will do it: — for me!" she said

proudly. "He knows the strong bow, with it he will send the arrow first to the man,— that will be when they stand clear in the moonlight. Then to the witch: — that all people may see they were near to each other. The arrows are good and the bow is good. I saw that it was so; — also I saw that no man of our people can use it better than can Gonzalvo. By the river I watched him. He needs no fire sticks to find the heart of an enemy — alone he can do it with an arrow."

Ka-yemo looked at her sullenly,— she was giving much of praise to the man she would have him detroy!

"How are you sure that he does not bring the thunder and lightning stick also?" he demanded,— "and how are you sure that it is not used for me?"

"Oh — fool you! — who make fears out of shadows — yet are so big to fight!" she breathed softly. "Why is it that the Navahu or the other wild people do not make you fear — yet the Castilians —"

"They are truly men of iron. As a boy I saw the things they could do," he answered.—"Not as men do I fear them, but it is their strong god who tames their beasts."

"Your arrows are good," said Yahn Tsyn-deh with conviction,—"when you see him dead as other men die, you will know that our own gods are also strong."

The dark had fallen heavily, and only the Ancient Star gleamed threatening as it waited for the moon. The smaller stars were not seen and the shadows were very dense.

Because of this a strange thing came to them as they reached the summit. Strong as was the heart of Yahn the Apache, she was struck by terror, and

Ka-yemo knew that the great god of the men of iron had sent a threat for his eyes to see.

For, still and erect against a dark wall of the Lost Others, stood a man outlined in fire. In Castilian war dress he stood, and little flickering lines of fire ran along helmet and breastplate and lance. No face could they see of the horror, which added to, rather than lessened the terror of Ka-yemo. A living face he could meet and fight — but this burning ghost of a man not yet dead —!

He turned and stumbled downward blindly, and Yahn Tsyn-deh clung to him and gripped his hand cruelly for silence, and when they sank at last beside a great boulder, her arms were around him, as though that clasp kept the solid world from crumbling beneath her feet.

"No — no — no!" muttered Ka-yemo as though she had actually uttered words of persuasion,—"it is what their padre said long ago. Their strong god has an army of saints, and of angels,— they stand guard; — all who go against them are swept into the flames of their Underworld! It is what the Padre Luis said — and now it has been seen by my eyes! Their altars are the stronger altars,— we will go there — we will both go; — the fire of their hell will not reach us at their altar — the medicine prayers of their padre are strong prayers — we will go to him —"

The old fear of his boyhood had enveloped him as the unchained electric force had enveloped the heigths. Yahn Tsyn-deh put up her hand to her throat; — she felt herself strangle for breath as she listened.

"It was some trick!" she insisted — though she also had trembled with awe — Listen to me! — they have many tricks — these white men! Because of

a trick will you go to their altars, and be shamed in your clan? Their priest is the head of all things — will you follow the steps of another when you can wear the feathers of a leader? Will you be laughed at by the tribe? Hear — oh hear! — and let your heart listen! Never again will the gods send you this chance to be great — this is your day and your night!"

"Their devils keep guard — the flames of their hell no man can fight!"

"Ka-yemo! — I am holding you close — I give myself to you! — one arrow only must you send when the witch maid is killed, and Tahn-té is killed,— one arrow, and forever you are the highest, and I am your slave to give you love! Ka-yemo!"

The light of the moon was sending a glow above Na-im-be mountains. The moon itself was not yet seen, but enough light was on the mesa for the pleading girl to see the face of the man she adored.

The face was averted and turned from her. In terror he bent the arrow shafts across his knee, and flung the bow far down into the shadows.

"*Ka-yemo!*"— she moaned as the last vestige of her idol was destroyed by his own hand; —"do you give me then to the Castilian? Must *I* pay the debt?"

"Against the gods of their hell I will not send arrows," he muttered —"He may not claim you — the sign sent to me here is a strong sign — a god of fire is a strong god — and I am only a man! It may be that if we go to their padre — and if we confess —"

She could see that he was blindly groping in his mind for some chance — some little chance, to be

forgiven — to be forgiven by the Castilians whose feet would be on his neck — and on hers!

It was his day and his night, and he had thrown it away! Never again could the day dawn in joy for those two.

She drew him to her as the light grew, and looked in the face she had loved from babyhood. It was a long look, and a strange one. She was thinking of the archer above them who waited to send death to a man and a maid!

"What is it?" he asked as her fingers slipped from his shoulder along his arm and clasped his hand with the closeness, the firmness of settled resolve.

"It is that you have chosen," she said quietly. "It is the right of the man to choose; — and it will be well. It is the right of the woman to follow: and before the moon comes again from the blanket of the east we will know — and the gods will know, that the choice is a good choice!"

She held his hand and led him upwards; — steadily, yet without haste. The edge of the moon showed red, and the moon was to be clear of the mountains when Tahn-té came to the portal of the star — thus had his mother told the girl while Yahn listened like a coiled snake close to the well.

To Ka-yemo, Yahn seemed again the adoring creature of love. She held him close, and whispered endearing things. Never had Yahn, the Apache tigress, let him see how completely her love could make her gentle and make him master. The sweetness of it, and the absolute relief when the arrows were destroyed — gave him a sense of security; — It would be easy to confess to the padre; — the Castilians would be glad of converts — and Juan Gon-

zalvo — someway they could make words to Juan Gonzalvo — and padre would help — and —

Holding closely his hand she led him up the ancient stairway, and the little doorways of the cliff dwellings showed black, for the moon had slipped above the far hills and shone, a dulled ball of fire through the sultry haze. Enough light it threw on the white cliffs to show any moving creature, and Ka-yemo glanced fearfully towards the portal of the star, for surely a movement was there!

But Yahn Tsyn-deh at the head of the stairway looked straight ahead where a man with a strong bow held himself close in the shadow of a great rock. When the twang of the bow string sounded, she loosened not her hand from that of Ka-yemo as he fell, but with her other hand she pulled aside the robe from her breast — also the necklace of the white metal, that not anything turn aside the point of the arrow which was to follow.

And when it came she fell to her knees, and then over the huddled body of the man she had loved and led to death.

She loosened not her hand, and only once she spoke.

"It is a good choice," she whispered, but he had led the way into the Twilight Land — and she followed as she had said was the right of a woman.

And the clan of Ka-yemo could chant songs of bravery all their days and not know that Yahn the Apache had saved the pride of her father's people, and had hidden the weakness of Ka-yemo on the heights of Puyé!

CHAPTER XXI

THE CALL OF THE ANCIENT STAR

WHEN the moon had scarce reached the center of the sky, a gray faced man slipped through the corn fields of the river lands, and spoke to the Spanish sentry who paced before the dwellings where the camp was made outside the wall.

The sentry wondered who the woman was who had held him belated, for many were now coming from Shufinne, and some of them were pretty.

But Capitan Gonzalvo laid himself down to dream of no woman. He crept to the pallet of Padre Vicente. There were no words lest others be aroused, but a pressure of a hand was enough to bring the padre to his feet, the sleep of the man was ever light as that of one who does sentry duty day time and night time.

Out into the open of the summer night they both passed, and in the shadow of a wall where the Tehua sentinel could not see, a man of iron broke down and half sobbed a confession of horror.

The padre paced to and fro in the dusk of the night, and gave not over much care to the shaken heart of the penitent.

"A hundred Aves, and half as many rosaries,—and candles for the altar of San Juan when we return to Mexico." He tabulated the penance on his fingers, with his mind clearly not on those details.

"Take you courage now, and hark to me," he said

brusquely. "You say you saw the maid and the man dead one on the other; — and that you fled across the mesa at sight of their faces. That pretty Apache devil told you that the witch lived at that place, and that the Po-Ahtun-ho was her lover. How know you that it was not indeed witchcraft you looked upon? How know you that the infernal magic was not used to change the faces of the two that you be sent home not knowing which are dead and which are living? This may yet be turned to our advantage."

Juan Gonzalvo was past thinking. Not though gold was found as plentiful as the white stones of Puyé would he again go to the witch accursed spot! His own armor had been touched by the fire of hell in that place until he had lain it aside while he waited for the coming of the sorcerer, and the sorcerer had in some way kept hidden — magic spells had been worked to blind the eyes of Gonzalvo to the faces of the others — even though light was given for the arrows to speed true! He would fight living Indians in the open: — but no more would he trail witches in the dark!

So he mumbled and made prayers and calmed himself somewhat at sight of the calm, ever cool padre.

"Go you to your rest," said his reverence at last,— "and forget all the work of this night."

"Forget? — but they will be found — they —"

"I will see that they are found, but let it not trouble you," stated Padre Vicente. "We must meet trickery by trickery here. Go to your bed, and sleep too sound for early waking."

"But — how —"— between the shock and fear of the night, Gonzalvo fairly clung to the quiet strength of the padre.

"Take your sleep: — and keep a still tongue forever! I have had a dream or a vision this night,"

and the padre smiled grimly. "I can as well afford a vision as can the elect of the Po-Ahtun! — and my vision will send people of Ka-yemo's clan to search for dead friends on the heights of Puyé!"

"And if they find there also — ?"

"Ah!" and the padre nodded and smiled that the thought had penetrated the shocked mind of Capitan Gonzalvo; —"If they find there also the evidence that their high priest is the lover of a witch — and that he runs from council prayers to meet her in the night: — is that not the best of all things the saints could send us? You have done good work for the cause this night, Juan Gonzalvo. Go now to your sleep — and when you hear of that which is found on Puyé, you hear it for the first time!"

The council of that night had been a late council because of the quaking of the earth. Every one knew it was time that a sacrifice be made to the visitor in the sky. All of evil was coming to the land because this had not been done. One Yutah slave belonged to the Quan clan, and a robe and shell beads must be given by the vote of the council to that clan. It would be a better thing to use the new Navahu who was made captive by the men of iron, but their new brothers would not listen to this wisdom.

When the sun looked over the edge of the mountain in the new day the sun must see the heart lifted high; — and the body must go to the murmuring river — then only could hope come that the evil magic be lifted from the land of the Te-hua people.

Thus the vote had been, and thus had Tahn-té been held in council long after the time the Moon Mother came over Ni-am-be mountains.

Don Ruy was at that council, and asked to speak against the offering of blood to the god whose eye was

as the star. But Tahn-té listened and then spoke,

"Your own god of the book asks for sacrifice — your god of the book accepted his own son as a sacrifice — and that people prospered! Your priests teach the blood atonement, and the death they gave the earth-born god was a hard death — if he had really died there! Being a god he could not die in that way; — all medicine men who know strong magic know that. But the blood was spilled and the spirit went away from that place — the earth gods always go away like that while they are young; — never do they die. There are days — and there are nights, when they come back! They speak in many ways to earth people. You men of iron do not to-day make blood sacrifice to your gods; — so you say! Yet your people go out to battle and kill many people for your god — also many of your own people are killed in such god wars — your tribes of different names call these wars 'holy'. Our people do not think like that. Even the wild tribes hold the Great Mystery sacred in their hearts. They will fight for hunting ground, or to steal women or corn — but to fight about the gods would bring evil magic on the land — the old men could not be taught that it is a good thing! Also your Holy Office has the torch, and the rack, and the long death of torture for the man who cannot believe. The priests of your jealous god do that work, and their magic is strong over men. You talk against our altars, but on our altars there is not torture,— there is one quick pain — and the door of the Twilight Land is open and the spirit is loose! This world where we live is a very ancient world, but it is not yet finished. All the old men can tell you that. It may be in the unborn days that earth creatures may see the

world when it finished,— and when the gods come back, and speak in the sunlight to men. In that time the sacrifice may be a different sacrifice. But in this time we follow the ancient way, for the gods have not shown us a different way."

"You have studied much in books — you have learned much from men," said Don Ruy —"You could change the minds of these people in this matter."

Tahn-té looked kindly on him, but shook his head.

"Not in the ages of ten men can you change the mind of the men you called Indian," he said, "in my one life I could not make them see this as you see it — yet am I called strong among them. Also I could not tell them that the way of the white priest when he breaks the bones in torture until the breath goes, is a better way than to take the heart quickly for the god! That would be a lie if I said it, and true magic does not come to the man who knows that he is himself a teller of lies!"

The men of the council went their separate ways to sleep in the kivas, well content that the angry god was to be appeased at the rising of the sun,— and Don Ruy rolled himself in his blanket and lay near the door where Ysobel and her husband lived apart from the camp, with only the secretary inside their walls. But Don Ruy slept little — and cursed the heathenish logic of Tahn-té, and wished him to the devil.

And stealthily as a serpent in the grasses,— or a panther in the hills, Tahn-té sped from the council of sacrifice, to the hills where he knew a girl had waited long for his coming.

Little thought gave he to trailers. The night before had been the night of the scalp dance — and now the trembling earth, and the council, had left the

men weary for the rest of sleep. He ran swiftly and steadily in the open as any courier to Shufinne might run.

But those of the Tain-tsain clan who followed, noted that he did not go to Shufinne,— he climbed instead the steeps where they were to climb, and for that reason their coming was stealthy, and the cleverest men were sent ahead, and all said prayers and cast prayer meal to the gods,— for this was a strange thing the white priest had seen in a vision — it was to be proven if he was of the prophets!

The two couriers of the clan knew it was proven when they saw the two dead people near the head of the stone stairway. And when they heard the sobs of a woman within the dwelling of the Reader of the Stars in the ancient days — also the soothing tones of a man,— they crept back into the shadows and told the leaders. And a circle of men was made about the place, and in silence they waited.

Ere their hearts had ceased to beat quickly from the run, that which they waited for stepped forth; — a man to whom a creature clung — her face was hidden against his breast, and he led her with care lest she see the dead people on the stairway — for the Navahu shrinks more than another from sight or touch of the dead!

"There are other places — and safe places," he said to her and held her close. "Does not the bluebird find nesting place in the forest? And does not her mate find her there in the summer nights?"

And then — with his arms around her, and his robe covering her, his path was closed by a warrior who stood before him! His eyes turned quickly on every side, but on every side was a circle of men,—

and the men were all of the clan of Ka-yemo to whom Tahn-té had never been precious since the days of boyhood — and the camp of Coronado.

And the younger men were for claiming the maid when they saw her face, and the older men read triumph against Tahn-té for the work of this night.

"That which is meant for the gods is not to be given to men," they said in chiding to the young men, and Tahn-té knew what they meant when they said it.

"It is the Navahu witch maid of Te-gat-ha," cried another —"look — brothers! This is a Navahu arrow through the eye of Ka-yemo, and through the heart of Yahn Tsyn-deh. Alone here she has destroyed them! — and alone here would Tahn-té the Po-Ahtun-ho have cherished her! The priest of the men of iron is a man of strong magic. His vision has sent us to find the one who has made angry the gods of our land!"

"Go you and gather pine for the altar," said the head of the clan, and two youths ran joyously down the slope; — for they were to aid in driving evil magic from the valley!

"This maid did not touch those dead people," said Tahn-té,—"for that she must not suffer."

"You Summer people are easily held by witches' craft," retorted one of the men insolently,— a day before he would only have addressed Tahn-té with reverence.

"Was she not marked for sacrifice at Te-gat-ha?" —"Has she not caused the killing of the corn?" "Did not the Navahu men come to destroy us because of her?" "Is the earth not angry that she has hidden in the sacred places?"

These questions came thick and fast for Tahn-té

to answer, and Tahn-té held her hand and knew there was no answer to be made. And Phent-zha, who was the oldest man there, looked at him keenly.

"Are you also not more weak in magic for her coming" he asked,—"is your heart not grown sick? The magic of the white priest is against you; — and it is strong! When we have taken the heart from this witch, and you have again fasted in the hills, the sick land and the sick people will be made better."

The maid looked from face to face in the glare of freshly lit torches, and caught little of meaning from the rapid speech. But no one touched her, and she looked with confidence into the eyes of Tahn-té. He had not moved from his tracks, and he held himself proudly as he faced the man who had long wished his humiliation.

"When the time comes to fast in the hills, I will know it," he said,—"and no hand touches the heart of this maid, but — my own!"

"It is at sunrise," said the governor, stilled by the look of the Po-Ahtun-ho —"a runner has been sent — the council will be waiting for the enchantress, and the women to prepare her will be waiting."

"I will lead her," said Tahn-té and took her hand, and from the medicine pouch he took one bead of the by-otle, and in Navahu he bade her eat of it in secret, which she did wonderingly, and the men of the Tain-tsain clan walked before and after them and held torches, and they went down the steep of Puyé before the moon had touched the pines of the western hills. And a runner was sent to Shufinne that the people there might come and put Yahn Tsyn-deh and her lover under the earth together.

CHAPTER XXII

"AT THE TRAIL'S END!"

THE morning stars were shining through the gray threatening sky, when a slender blanket draped figure stepped from Ysobel's doorway into the dusk, and came near putting foot on Don Ruy Sandoval who lay there as if on guard.

There was a little gasp, and the blanket was clutched more closely.

"Your Excellency!" breathed Chico wonderingly —"awake so early — and — here?"

"Awake so late," amended his excellency,—"and is this not a good place to be?"

"In truth I am having doubts of my own," confessed the secretary with attempted lightness. "What with barbaric battles, and earth quakings,— and a night when the breath of volcanoes seemed abroad in the land and strange lightenings came up from the earth — it suggests no dreams of paradise! Don Diego thinks it is because the expedition has not been more eager for souls."

"Has he not converted Säh-pah and won a lady-love?" asked Don Ruy —"he is at least that much in advance of the rest of us. I've had no luck, and you are as much of a bachelor as ever you were."

Chico contemplated the morning star in silence, and Don Ruy smiled.

"If the enchanted ring of Señor Ariosta should fall at your feet from yon star; — or the lamp of

Alladin would come out of the earth in one of these quakings, what would you ask it to do with us all, since this camp is not to your liking?" he asked.

"I would wish you safe in Mexico with no sorcerer to doctor your wounds if you were bent on acquiring such pleasures."

"No learned professor could have brought healing more quickly," contended Don Ruy,—"and the sorcerer, if so he be, has given me food for thought at least. Which reminds me that you are not to go to the river mesa this morning in case you see the barbarians trooping that way for ceremonies."

A runner came panting past them from towards the hills, and the gate was opened for him and closed again, and a herald from the terrace shouted aloud sentences arousing all who yet slept; — not only arousing them, but causing unexpected shrieks and cries of consternation from many dwellings. There were the lamentations of the old women of the Tain-tsain clan, and their wails sent the thrill of a mysterious dread through the night that was dying, for the day had not yet come.

"What is it — what?" asked the secretary in a whisper of dread. "You know what the thing is; — tell me!"

"Not so nice a thing that you should trade a convent garden for it," confessed Don Ruy —"if the wishing ring were mine you would be wafted there before that star goes pale."

"Oh!"— and the secretary strove to assume a lightness not to be honestly felt in that chorus of wails. "You would make me a messenger to your lady of the tryst — and I would tell her that since luck with the pagan maids has not been to your fancy, you

may please to walk past her balcony and again cast an eye in that direction!"

"And at the same time you might whisper to her that I would not now need to glance at her the second time to know her," he added. "Even the armor of a Bradamante could not mask her eyes, or dull for me the music of her voice."

"Excellency!"

"It is a most strange place to make words for the wooing of a lady, is it not?"— asked Don Ruy looking up at the slender form wrapped in the blanket. —"But new worlds are in making when earth quakes come,— and our to-morrows may be strange ones, and — sweetheart comrade, I have lain at your door each night since your head rested on my shoulder there in the arroyo."

Someway Don Ruy made his arm long enough to reach the blanket and draw the hesitating figure to him, and rested his cheek against the russet sandals, and then a very limp Master Chico was on the ground beside him, and was hearing all the messages any lady of any balcony would like Love to send her.

"I cannot forgive you letting me carry all that water for a fainting fit — and there was no fainting fit!" she protested at last,—"all these days I've lived in terror; — not quite certain!"

"Think you nothing of the uncertain weeks you have given me?"— he retorted.—"I had my puzzled moments I do assure you! And now that I think of it — I'm in love with a lady whose actual name I have not been told!"

"Are we not equal in that?" she whispered, and he laughed and held her close as a bandaged throat would allow.

"Ruy Sandoval is a good enough name to go to the priest with," he said, "and if 'Doña Bradamante' has no other I'll give her one if she'll take it."

"Despite the Indian grandmother, and the madness of longing for life in the open — and —."

"And the Viceroy and court of Spain to boot!" he declared recklessly. "Sweetheart, I must have the right to guard you in a new way if need be, for these are strange days."

Even while they spoke the stars were shot over by the green light of a promised dawn, and against the faint sky line of the mesa a strange procession came. Men carrying long fringes of the cedar such as grow in the moist places in the cañons,— also festoons of the ground pine, and flowers of the sun with the brilliant petals like warm rays.

The bearers of these ran swiftly, but the others moved more steadily, and Don Ruy called to José to learn for him the meanings of things, and why Tahn-té, the Ruler, walked like that as if in prayer, and clasped hands with a girl who smiled up in his face as a child on a holiday, though all the older men looked as though walking to battle.

"It is the witch maid who has brought evil magic on the land," said José, who had heard the herald — also she has enchanted the Po-Ahtun-ho with devil's arts, and has killed Yahn Tsyn-deh and Kaye-mo with Navahu arrows on Puyé. They say she laughs to show that no knife can harm her, and she goes to the altar instead of the Yutah; — for it is she the earth groaned for."

"Go —"— said Don Ruy to his lately claimed "Doña Bradamante"—"keep within the house with Ysobel until we come again. There may be much to

do, Lady mine, but there are no records for you to keep this day."

And without protest or reply he was obeyed. There was something so awful in the sight of the smiling maid of the bluebird wing, and the wails of the women who mourned those she had destroyed, that one would willingly flee the sight of their meeting.

But the Te-hua guards closed around the enchantress and the fanatics of vengeance were barred out. Those meant for the Mesa of the Hearts were not to be given to people!

Publicly the governor made thanks to the priest of the men of iron; — he it was who had smelled out the witch — and sent the men where her dead was found! Plain it was that their white brothers helped in magic and in battle. Let the old men think wisely and well before they let such brothers go from the land. For the angry gods, and the quaking earth, the priest of the beard had found the cause; — also the cure had he found. Did not the sun symbol belong to this man for this work? Let the old men think well of this thing!

Don Ruy held José at his side, and listened, and hearing all, he faced the padre with the first anger they had seen in his reckless kindly eyes.

"For your own ends of the gold search you have done this thing?" he demanded. "To a death on the altar have you sent that child-woman? Good priest of the church, you make a man wonder if the saints indeed listen, and God is above!"

"Oh — impious!" groaned Don Diego, and crossed himself in horror. "Oh Excellency — your words are apostate — unsay them and tempt not Almighty Power!"

The padre turned pale with anger and shut his teeth close under the dark beard. But he was not a coward, and the habit of domination through special privileges was a habit of many years, and it served him against the merely temporal power of even regal influences.

"Of the witch creature I gave them no word," he said—"it was their thrice accursed sorcerer they were sent in search of. But the two belong to each other, and the old men of the order know now that their high priest is in league with devils. Never again will he be the Ruler. His power is overthrown. He cannot save even his own witch-mate from the vengeance of the clans. The thing we have crossed these deserts for will be given to us since his voice against us is silenced. Is that a thing to regret, Excellency? I thought it was for this we made entrance to the land—and for this you joined hands for the expedition!"

He had recovered his ease of manner, and even a mocking tone crept into the final words. Don Ruy looked around the faces of the Castilians and Mexicans and saw no more of special emotion in the light of the gray dawn than they had shown at the dance of the scalps in the glow of torches so few hours ago.

To them all it was only a witch being led to death, and they had seen that same thing in Christian lands. It was not a thing for special wonder,—except that this sorceress was young, and that she looked at the young Indian Ruler, and smiled often, and little sounds like a mere murmur of a song came sometimes from her lips.

"*Just at daylight Doli calls*
The bluebird has a voice
His voice melodious

ONLY A WITCH LED TO DEATH

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That flows in gladness
Doli calls! Doli calls!"

The guard shrank away from her as she began. The Navahu captive who had been long a slave, said it was the song of the Dawn, and that it was the last song of many songs which were part of the wonderful "Night Chant" ceremony of his people,— it was a ceremony to heal all things of the ills of life.

But despite his words the Te-hua men shrank away, and the Te-hua women had trembling hands as they stripped her, and crowned her with the sacred pine, and fastened around her a girdle of the feathery young cedar, and in the green of the crown they thrust the golden disks of the flowers of the sun. She lifted the lion skin from the ground and held it close as a garmant, and stood alone against the terrace wall. The people shrank and half feared to look at her lest the Dawn song be a witch charm to enchant them.

Po-tzah had brought to Tahn-té the white robe of the priest who makes sacrifice, and a long knife of white flint for which the sheath was softest of deerskin, and the symbols painted on it were those of the Father Sun and Mother Moon.

And while the maid held close the garment he had given her, and chanted her Dawn song dreamily, Tahn-té lifted from the ground the wing of the bluebird tossed aside by the medicine women who made her ready for the sacrifice, and he placed it in the white band about his own head so that he wore two instead of one, and then he lifted his voice and spoke, and no other sound was heard but his voice, and the low song of the witch maid.

"Men of Te-hua," he said. "If I speak not you will not know the truth; — and it may be that you

will live many days ere you believe this truth! The maid who has come down from the hills is not a stranger to Povi-whah — and has done no evil. The daughter of Kā-ye-fah is this maid. She is Kā-ye-povi, the child who was lost. All you people know of the years of the grieving of her father who was strong for that which was good. His child has come back to find her own people. On the trail she was lost, and evil magic of the men of iron have made hard your hearts when she came to you. I have waited until all the people were here to listen. Now I speak. To speak at Puyé to the clan of Tain-tsain would not have been wise. They were sent by the vision of the white priest to find a witch woman. It is the child of Kā-ye-fah they find, and instead of glad hearts, and glad speech, she is given by the Te-hua people only the crown of the sacred pine. Let her own clan of the Towa Toan speak!"

A thrill of wonder ran through the crowd, but no kind faces were there, and Tahn-té took from his medicine pouch the last seed of the sacred medicine given to man by the gods. There had been many seeds when they left Puyé. He knew he was daring the gods, and that the penalty would be heavy. But her fearless face, and the music of her Dawn song was payment for much.

And to the gods he would answer!

The gray dawn was gone, and the green dawn was merging into the yellow where the stars are lost.

The head of the Towa Toan clan spoke from a terrace.

"We have heard the words of Tahn-té. The witch maid is not known by our people, and our clan does not claim her! By evil magic has the song of this maid blinded the eyes of Tahn-té,— and by evil

magic will she make desolate the land if she is let live. The white priest has strong medicine — and good medicine of the gods. The men of Te-gat-ha and the men of Navahu knew her as a witch, and sought her. They did not find her because the men of iron were not their brothers. To us they are brothers. I give thanks, and we think they should have that which they seek with us. Their priest works also for our god, and the symbol of the god is not to be hidden from him. Also the altar waits; — and the stars are going away!"

Tahn-té touched the hand of the maid.

"Come!" he said gently, and as he touched her hand, he gave to her the last seed from the fruit of the sacred plant,—"eat for the trail you must walk over, and sing for me alone the song holy of the Navahu Sun God; I take you to meet him on the Mesa of the Hearts."

Don Ruy tried to press through the guard, but the orders of the heads of the clans had been strong orders. The Castilian brothers might follow; but the stars were going away, and there was no time for words after the crown was made. The flowers must not wither above a living face.

And the maid entered the canoe with the Po-Ahtun-ho and the Te-hua boatmen plied the paddles so that the crossing was quick, and all the others followed, and some men swam, and the Castilian horses and riders went also. And a second priest of the Po-Ahtun went with a white robe, and a good knife in his girdle. Tahn-té was called "sorcerer" by the wise men of iron, and it was best to trust not entirely to the heart of a sorcerer. He was plainly bewitched, and his heart might grow weak when he looked on the altar, and looked on the maid!

Tahn-té pointed to the upturned face of the God-Maid on the bosom of the south mesa.

"That was my altar to you all the days of my boyhood," he said softly, "there I met the god thoughts; there were the serpents tamed. It is the God-Maid of this valley and her face is ever to the sun. To her was my love given while I waited for your face! Listen! — and know this is so — and sing now the song of the Sun God and the earth's end."

With her eyes on his she chanted the words, and the Te-hua oarsmen dared not look on her face for very terror. The words they did not know — but no victim had ever yet gone singing to that altar.

"In my thoughts I approach — I approach!
The Sun God approaches,
Earth's end he approaches.
Estsan-atlehi approaches
In old age walking
The beautiful trail.
In my thoughts I approach — I approach!
The Moon God approaches
Earth's end he approaches —"

The canoe touched the shore, and the maid clasped the hand of Tahn-té and went over the sand lightly as a child who wanders through flower fields to a festival. He looked in her eyes and knew that the magic of the sacred seed was strong, and that the hand of no man could hurt her.

"Your trail is to the hills," he said.—"To the heart of the forest you go. Where the bluebird builds her nest — there you build the nest where we meet again. You see your wings in my hair? I wear both of them that they lead me again to your trail when the time comes. When the bluebird calls

to her mate, I will hear your voice in that call. When the anger of the gods has passed, I will find you again in the Light beyond the light at the trail's end."

"At the trail's end," she said as a child repeats a lesson —"I build the nest for you, and sing the bluebird song for you at the trail's end."

"Thanks to the gods that it will be so," he said, and sprinkled prayer meal to the four ways.—"The Spirit People stand witness! The gods will be good in that After-world; — I will find you again."

They had reached the edge of the mesa — and the pale yellow of the sky had been covered with a weird murky red. For all the many followers, a strange hush was on the height, and far in the south low thunder was heard. The same still, heavy air of the night was brooding over the world, and long rays of copper and dull red were flung like banners to the zenith. Each man's eyes looked strange questions into the eyes of his neighbor, and the Te-hua men came not close to the witch maid, and the man at the altar.

"The Sun God approaches — approaches!
Earth's end he approaches!"

They could hear the low chant of her witch song, and they could see Tahn-té offer prayer meal to the Spirit People of the four ways, and to the upper and the nether world. At his word she laid herself on the rock, and no other priest was asked to help, or to hold her, and that was a sacrifice such as had never been seen in that place.

"No hand but mine shall touch you: — O Bird of my Wilderness!" he said.

"In the Light beyond the light I wait for you at

the trail's end," she said, and laughed that his hand rested on her breast.

And the sun, blood red, came over the edge of the world, and Don Ruy cried aloud at the lifted hand of Tahn-té, and the gleam of the white flint knife.

But the guard closed in, and one of his own men caught him, and asked for pardon afterwards, and when he could again see the altar, the knife was red, and a heart was held outward to the sun that looked like the flame of burning worlds.

And a long, shivering, high keyed chant of the Te-hua people went upwards to the sky, that the gods might know they were witness. But in the midst of it the rumbling as of thunder was under their feet and the earth rocked. Sulphurous fumes came upwards from the long closed crevices of the solitary mesa; and to the south there was the crash as of falling worlds, and the great mesa of The Face lifted before their eyes, and settled again as a wave of the river lifts and breaks on the shore.

The chant of the sacrifice was silenced on their lips, and they fled downward at that sight, for the face of the God-Maid of the mesa no longer looked upwards to the sun! The outline of the brow, and the cheek, and the dainty woman's chin they could still see; — but the face was turned from them — turned toward the south — where the gods have ever gone in an evil season!

And only Don Ruy Sandoval saw the heart put back in the breast of the witch maid, and saw her wrapped in the white robe of the Po-Ahtun-ho, and saw the crevice where the Powers of the Under-world had opened a grave for her there on the Mesa of the Hearts.

And even he watched afar off; for there was that in

the face of the Indian priest not to be understood by the white man who felt both pity and horror.

But he waited at the foot of the mesa, and held the canoe while the Po-Ahtun-ho, who had the logic of a white man, but the heart of an Indian, came down and entered it in silence, and as they crossed the river, stared as though scarcely seeing it, at The Face now turned southwards on the mesa.

"You — loved her?" said Don Ruy at last and something of the tone of a lover in the voice made Tahn-té close his eyes for a moment, and then look at the Castilian. He did not need to speak.

"Yet — you could do — *that?*"

"When the gods are angered against earth people, it is always the most precious they demand in sacrifice," he said. "When we make vows, the gods watch that we keep the vows — else we pay, Señor,— we pay — we pay!"

CHAPTER XXIII

THE PROPHECY OF TAHN-TE

VAGUE tremblings were still felt underfoot; the river was red with the clay of fallen banks. Smoke came from an ancient crater to the south, and also the east, and above the Mesa of the Hearts hung a cloud of volcanic dust, or a puff of smoke escaped from the red ash-covered fissures of the Under-world.

The women were gathered in terror in the court, but fled at the sight of Tahn-té. The anger of the earth was a thing of fear; but he was made see that there were worse things, and they covered the faces of their children that his eyes might not rest on them.

At the door of the council house he paused and Don Ruy beside him. There was much talk. All the leading men were there, also Padre Vicente and Don Diego. They entered, and there was silence.

No one offered to Tahn-té the pipe, and no one spoke to him.

The priest of the New God had told them things — he knew men's hearts — he had confessed so many! — He told them it was love for the witch maid by which the hand of the sorcerer kept every other man from touching her.— Even to take the heart from her breast, was an easier thing than to give her to the men of Te-gat-ha or of Povi-whah, who had looked on her face and asked for her, also he had wrapped about her his priestly robe of office before he laid her in the

earth where Satan had broken the rock to reach for her!

Their sorcerer had traded his robe of office for the evil love of an enchantress: — never again must a god be offended by sound of his prayers!

And no one offered him the pipe, and no one spoke to him. He sat alone and looked with unseeing eyes at the weeping god on the altar.

Padre Vicente was seated in a place of honor. He looked at Tahn-té across the circle, and it was plain that the ways had changed since that other day of council when they had looked into each others eyes, and the pagan had been the Ruler!

The right hand man of the governor arose. He was the oldest man, and he spoke.

"While the earth has trembled we have talked — and the trembling has grown little while we talked," he said. "It is plain that the gods have sent these signs that we may know our white brothers are indeed of the sun, and the symbol of the sun should be given to their keeping."

Another man arose.

"Also these new brothers will guard our fields from the Navahu and the Apache," he said. "We will have the tamed animals to ride, and our enemies will run before the fire sticks our brothers will give us."

The governor arose.

"Their god we are asked to take, and the god will do much for us if the sun symbol is given to their keeping. To us that seems good. The keepers of the sun symbol are two, and must be only two. Let it be for the ancients of the Po-Ahtun to say which man of their order gives up the secret, and makes medicine to forget it was ever in his keeping."

A man of the Po-Ahtun stood up and looked at Tahn-té.

"A man and a woman hold that secret of the symbol of the god," he said. "In our own kiva must that be spoken of, and not in another place. But the hearts of our people are gentle towards our new brothers who smell out witches, and do not mate with them! Our order will surely make medicine that the priest of the great king be given that secret to keep for us, and the Sun God will smile again on our land."

"It is well — it is very well," said all the council. And then there was a long silence, and they looked at Tahn-té until he arose.

"Not except I die for you, will you believe; — and even then you will not believe," he said in sadness. "You, my people, will accept the god of the gold hunters, and you will not see that it is only riches they want at your hands! In other years you will see. When the men of Te-hua work in chains for the men of Spain — and for the masters of the men of Spain! — Then in that day will the men of Te-hua tell to their sons these words — the words of the prophecy of Tahn-té!"

"We are much troubled, and our hearts are sad," said Po-tzah. "The magic of the white god is strong — and their priest has let our people see that it is strong. We do not want that magic against our children."

"Against your children will the magic come in the unborn years!" said Tahn-té with decision. "You will take the god of the white man because one more god, or one more baptism hurts no man. You will be trapped by fair words until I see the time when you can circle in the half of a day all the fields you dare

plant for your own! The Flute of the Gods will be silenced in the land. Your Te-hua daughters will be slaves for the men of the iron! The sacred places will be feeding lands for their animals. The Te-hua priests will wait the word of the white man ere they dare go to the groves of the sacred trees for the prayer wreaths to the gods!"

"The sacred pine must be sacred to all — always!" said Po-tzah.

"Not anything is sacred to the white men — I have looked in their books; — I, of all Te-hua men!"

Padre Vicente saw that the old magic of the talking leaves was potent; — and he arose without waiting for formal interpretation.

"He has looked in the books with the eyes of a sorcerer!" he declared, thus openly accusing Tahn-té before the council.—"He has read crooked things — and his words are the words of the man who mated with the witch in the hills!"

The council stared at this new sign that strong magic was with the priest of the robe — hé was suddenly given knowledge of the tongue of Te-hua! Don Diego stared in wonder and crossed himself many times.

"It is a language infernal even to the people born to it," he gasped —"but that it should be given to one of us on the day when we are openly claimed as brothers is a special sign of grace. Thanks to the saints who sent it your way instead of mine!"

"This man has brought evil on you until the earth groans and turns," continued the Padre. "His mother of the caves is called 'holy' and he is called strong in the light of the sky: — But the sky is angry, and the Great God and his saints are angry that this

sorcerer has cheated you so long with enchantments of the devil! Be strong for the saving of your own souls, and leave him to his witch mates and to his hell!"

Even Don Ruy was astounded that the padre addressed the council in their own words — truly of all priests ever frocked he had found the one most subtle for the work in hand, for having gained the council — as it was easy to see he had gained them — Padre Vicente spoke in Castilian to Tahn-té.

"Yet does my office exact absolution for you, if you but crave it with a contrite heart," he said for the benefit of Don Ruy and Don Diego who listened. "You have worked for your devils, and they have deserted you, and stripped you of power. Acknowledge the true God and the saints will intercede for your favor."

Tahn-té looked at him, and his smile was strange.

"There was a man named Judas in your holy book," he said, "only silver did he crave for his work. You are greater than Judas; you work for the metal more precious. Is it thirty pieces you want ere you crucify me utterly?"

The figure of a woman darkened the entrance — a slender fragile figure who moved to him swiftly, and noted no others in the dusk of the council house. In Shufinne the word had reached her of the horror of Puyé — and she had come quickly as might be, and the sound of his living voice drew her breathless, but thankful to his side, and his arm circled her in support and in tenderness as he looked over her head to the Te-hua men of the council.

"I see your thoughts, and I read them," he said. "The men who seek the gold have put a wall between you and me. That which you have you can give

them; — but remember in your hearts that there are things which belong to the unborn, and such things you have no power to give them Only so long as you keep your own religion, and your own gods, so long will your tribe stand as a tribe; — no longer! Step by step your children will have to fight the strangers for that which is now your own. Only your god-thoughts will bind you as brothers; — the god of the gold hunters will poison your blood, and will divide your clans, and will divide your children, until your names are forgotten in the land!"

"The sorcerer who tells you this is the brother to the serpents in the Desert!" said Padre Vicente springing to his feet in angry impatience; —"enough of words have been said of this —."

A sound between a scream and a moan silenced the words on his lips, and Don Ruy felt his blood run chill, as the drooping figure of the Woman of the Twilight stood suddenly upright with lifted hand.

"Teo!"— she murmured in utter gladness,— and moved through the half light of the room towards the Castilians. "Teo!"

"Holy God!" whispered Don Ruy, while the padre turned white. Don Diego stared in horror — only one named Teo came in his mind — the Greek who should belong to the Holy Office in Seville; — the man whose word even now was wanted as to the older days of Christian slave trade in Europe!

"Don Teo!" she was quite close to him now, and she spoke as a trembling child who craves welcome,— "I — Mo-wa-thé — speak! O Spirit; — you have come back from the Star — you have come —."

The Te-h ı men, and Tahn-té also, waited in wonder. Never before had the Twilight Woman

gone like that to a man — and she was so close that the man shrank from her against the wall of the room.

"Back!"— he muttered, and he spoke Te-hua now, and his voice was rough with rage and fear,— "This woman is evil, and brings evil power!"

"She is the Woman of the Twilight — the holy woman of the caves," said a man of the Po-Ahtun, for Tahn-té could find no words for the wonder she wakened.

"She is an enchantress who fights against the true god and his angels; — a witch of evil magic!"— and the padre was white, and breathing hard lest she touch him.

"A witch!"— she echoed in horror.—"I?— Teo—."

She crept to him in abject supplication and reached out her hand, touching the sleeve of his robe.

"Back!"— he shouted in horror — and held the crucifix between them —"Thing of the Evil One! May your tongue be palsied — may your magic fail — may —."

Tahn-té hurled him aside, and caught his mother as she fell; and the padre leaned half fainting against the wall, with great beads of sweat standing on his face, and the crucifix still lifted as a barrier or as a threat.

But the threat was useless to the slender creature of the caves.

"Teo — Teo!" she whispered, and then "Tahn-té," and then the breath went, and her son laid her gently on the floor, while the padre regarded *him* with a new horror! Don Ruy watching them both, choked back an oath at the revelation in the white face.

"BACK! THING OF THE EVIL ONE!"

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The Te-hua men also drew away; — even Po-tzah averted his face when Tahn-té looked from one to the other!

Again had their eyes seen the strength of the white medicine god. The holy Woman of the Twilight had been destroyed before their eyes. It was the greatest magic thay had yet seen!

Tahn-té saw it, and knew it; and felt as he had felt when a boy, and he had stood alone and apart — the only child of the sky. He had come again into his own! He was akin to none of earth's children.

Then the man of the Po-Ahtun spoke.

"Two there were who held the secret of the sun symbol; — Now there is only one,— she has taken it through the Twilight Land to the Light beyond the light."

"Two?"— said Don Ruy —"and this woman was one? And the other?"

No one spoke, but Tahn-té looked at him; and again there was no need for words.

"Medicine can be made to make a man forget," said Tahn-té to the men of Te-hua —"but no medicine can be made to make a man remember! One keeper of the secret is dead by the magic of the white priest. Your children's children will give thanks in the days to come that it was not given to the men of iron."

"It is a secret of the tribe!" protested the man of the Po-Ahtun.

"It is now the secret of the god who hid it in the earth," said Tahn-té. "By all earth people who knew it — it has been forgotten!"

"But — without it we will lose our brothers of the new god!"

"Without it you will surely lose your brothers of

the new god!" he assented. "Each time you look on the God-Maid of the mesa who has turned away her face, you will remember the prophecies of Tahn-té! Each time the God of Young Winter paints leaves yellow for the sleep to come, your children will see a sign on the mountain to tell them that Tahn-té was indeed Brother to the Serpent as that man said in his mocking! — also that the prayers of Tahn-té do not end. Free I came from the Desert to you, and I carried the Flute of the Gods, and fruit for your children: — free I go out from your dwellings and carry my 'witch mother' to rest!"

He gathered her in his arms, and looked once into the pallid face of her accuser and destroyer. At that look from the pagan priest the white priest shrank and covered his face with the cowl.

"You — go?" said Po-tzah.

"In the place of Povi-whah another will hear your prayers to the gods, and I — Tahn-té the outcast — I go!"

No more words were spoken among the men of the council. In silence they watched him as he walked with his burden up the trail of the mesa where he had run so gladly to make his boy vow at the shrine.

No happy sign shone for him this time in the sky. It was as he said to Don Ruy; — those who make vows to the gods,— and forget them for earth people, pay — and pay prices that are heavy! But above him a bird swept into the golden sky. He put up his hand to the wings in his hair — and heard plainly the words of the mate who would wait his call at the trail's end.

And Don Ruy Sandoval watched the man called "sorcerer" out of sight, and then went to the dwelling of José and gathered to his breast

TAHN-TÉ; THE OUTCAST

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the secretary who had adopted blanket draperies.

"Sweetheart comrade," he said without proper prelude or preparation —"There is not anything in this weary world worth living for but Love, and Love alone. Shall we take the homeward journey and go where we can guard it?"

"There are tears in your eyes," said his "Doña Bradamante,"—"and you look as if you make love to me, yet think of some other thing!"

"I have seen a man live through hell this day," he answered. "Never ask me, Sweetheart — what the hell was. It is beyond belief that a man could live it, and continue to live after it."

CHAPTER XXIV

THE BLUEBIRD'S CALL

EVEN in the long after years in stately Christian Spain, Don Ruy was a silent man when his serene lady in stiff brocades and jewelled shoes would mock at court pageantry and sigh for the reckless days when she had worn the trappings of a page and followed his steps into the north land of barbaric mysteries.

Mystery much of it had remained for her! The life of the final days in the terraced village by the great river had been masked and cloaked for her. Ysobel and José had been silent guards, and Don Ruy could not be cajoled into speech!

But there had been a morning he suddenly became a very compelling commander for all of them; and his will was that the cavalcade head for the south and Mexico as quickly as might be, and that Padre Vicente de Bernaldez separate from them all and seek converts where he would. A horse and food was allowed to him, but no other thing.

Don Diego exclaimed with amazement at such arrangement, and warned Don Ruy that the saints above, and Mother Church in Spain, would demand account for such act on the part of even Don Ruy Sandoval!

"Is it indeed so?" asked Don Ruy, and smiled with a bitter meaning as he looked on the padre: — "Will you, señor priest, tell this company it is at

your own will and request that you remain in this land of the barbarians? Or is your mind changed, and do you fancy Seville as a pleasant place for your journey?"

But Padre Vicente turned the color of a corpse, and said openly before them all, that he asked freedom to journey to other Indian villages. Thus, white and silent he was let go. He went without farewell. If he found other villages none can tell, but the men of a great Order framed before the building of the Egyptian pyramids, do know that the traces of a like Order is to-day in one of the villages of that province of New Spain, and that there is legend of a white priest who lived in their terraces of the mesa, and taught them certain things of the strange outside world so long as they let him live. But his name is not remembered by men.

What Don Ruy Sandoval said to the Viceroy of Mexico on his return, was in private conference, but a royal galleon carried him, and carried a strangely found Mexic bride, across the wide seas to Spain, where the wonderful "Relaciones" were made the subject of much converse, but never printed, and during the lifetime of the adventurer called Ruy Sandoval, the province of New Spain along the Rio Grande del Norte was locked and barred against the seeker of gold or of souls — it was the closed land of mystery: — the province of sorcerers, where Mother Earth hid beneath her heart the symbol of the Sun Father.

But there are legends there in the valley of the Tehua people to tell of that time of trial three centuries ago. Also there are the records written on mesa and mountain. In the time of that far away, the Spirit People worked together on Na-im-be Mountain until of the evergreen pine, a giant figure of a man grew

there, and around him is growing the white limbs and yellow leaves of the aspen groves. The hands of that figure reach high overhead and are to the south, and they hold the great Serpent whose body is as a strung bow in its arch, and whose head is high on the hill where the enchanted lake, known by every one, reflects the sky. Tahn-té, whose mother was the Woman of the Twilight, said the God of Winter would send a sign that the people might know the ancient worship of the creeping Brother was a true thing — and so it was done — all men can see it when the Spirit People turn yellow the leaves.

Other things spoken by him have come true until the Te-hua priests know that one born of a god did once live among them as a boy and as a man.

Like children bewildered did the clans of Povi-whah watch the silent swift departure of their white brothers from whom they had hoped much. They thought of many things and had trouble thoughts while they waited until the mourning of Tahn-té in the hills would be over, and he would come again to their councils. But when the waiting had been so long that fear touched their hearts, then men of the highest medicine sought for him in the hills, that his fasts be not too long, and he be entreated to return: — that turned-away face of the God-Maid on the mesa made their hearts weak, and they needed the strong prayers of Tahn-té. His name meant the Sunlight, and their minds were in shadow after his going away.

With prayer words and prayer music they sought for him, and sacred pollen was wafted to the four ways, and all the ways of the Spirit, that the help of the Lost Others might come also.

They told each other of the promise of Po-se-yemo and of Ki-pah, that in each time of stress a leader

who was god-sent would come to the Te-hua people so long as they were faithful to the Things of the Spirit.

This had truly been a season of stress, and an appeal of new, strange gods!

Tahn-té, the leader, had been born and had come to them; the Flute of the Ancient Gods he had carried as the Sign! — and as they whispered it to each other, their eyes had a new terror, and they sought wildly for reasons to justify themselves.

He had come. They had choice, and they chose the new white brothers, and the new god promises!

He had come; — and they had closed their hearts against his words — they had driven him away as in other days the Ancient Fathers had driven Po-se-yemo to the south: — for the gods only live where the hearts of men are true, and strong, and of faith!

These things they had been told by the Ancients, but they remembered it now anew as they followed each other in silence to the hills, and to the white walls of Puyé — and to the tomb there newly built that the Woman of the Twilight might rest where her people had lived in the lost centuries.

The portal of it was closed, and the sign of her order was cut in the rock at the portal.

The priests made many prayers, but no trace of the lost Ruler could they find. All was silence in that place of the dead, but for the song of a bluebird flitting from one ancient dwelling to another.

Younger men went far to the west where the people of the Hopi mesas had loved him; — somewhere in the world he must be found!

But the Hopi people mourned also, for they had heard the strange call of a flute across the sands in the night time, and had feared to answer to the call, and in

the morning there was no sound of the flute, and no priest of the flute to be found: — only a trail across the desert sand — and the trail led the way of the sun trail, and the Winds of the Four Ways blew, and swept it from sight — and they knew in their hearts that Tahn-té had sent his good-bye call ere he went from the land of men to the land of gods.

They knew also that he went alive — for the god-born do not die.

This word the couriers took back to the Te-hua people of the Rio Grande, and fires were lit for him as they have been lighted for centuries that the god Po-se-yemo might know that their faith in the valley of the great river was yet strong for the ancient gods.

Three centuries of the religion of the white strangers have not made dim the signal fires to those born of the sky!

The walls of Povi-whah have melted again into Mother Earth. Silent are the groves where the Ancient Others carved their homes from the rock walls of the heights. Wings of vivid blue flit in the sunlight from the portal of the star to bough of the piñon tree — and a brooding silence rests over those high levels; — only the wind whispers in the pines, and the old Indians point to the bird of azure and tell of a Demon-maid who came once from the land of the Navahu, and wore such wings, and sang a song of the blue bird, and enchanted a god-born one with her promise to build a nest and wait for him — at the trail's end!

An ancient teller of Te-hua legends will add that the trail of Tahn-té was covered by the sands of the Four Ways and no living people ever again looked on his face,— and that the Te-hua priests say the strong god of the men of iron swept him into the

ONLY A TRAIL ACROSS THE DESERT SANDS

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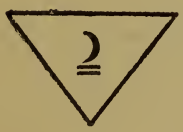
Nothing because he alone stood against the new faith in that time of trial.

The teller of tales does not know if this be true or not — all gods can be made strong by people, and it is not good to battle against the god of a strong people: — they can send strange sorceries and wild temptings, and the Navahu maid had such charm she was never forgotten by men who looked upon her face. It is also well known that the bluebird is a sacred bird for medicine, and does call at every dawn on those heights, and the wings worn in the banda of Tahn-té might, through strong love, have become a true charm; — and might have led him at last to the nest of the witch maid in some wilderness of the Far Away; — who can tell?

But all men know that the prophecies of Tahn-té are true to-day in the valley of the Rio Grande — and that his vision was the vision of that which was to be.

Aliksai!



GLOSSARY

"Alikasai!"	= Hopi ceremonial word for a story telling, equivalent to "Once upon a time," or "Thus it was."
Alvarado, Hernando de	= A lieutenant of Coronado, 1540.
Atoki	= The Crane.
Ah-ko	= Acoma, N. M., a village of the Queres people.
Apache	= A warrior tribe of Athapascan stock in Arizona.
Awh-we	= "Mountain Place."
By-otle (*see Py-otle*).	
Chinig-Chinik	= A Pacific coast tribe of Nature worshippers.
Chilan Balam	= Indian priest and prophet. 16th Century.
Ci-bo-la	= Zuni, N. M. The only surviving village of the "Seven Cities of Cibola" of the early Spanish chronicles.
Ci-cu-yé	= Indian village and river. Pecos, N. M.
"Cabeza de Vaca"	= Alvar Nunez: — the first European to cross the land and make record of the natives of the Arizona region. (1528–36).
Dok-os-lid	= Navaho sacred mountain of the west. San Francisco Mt., Arizona.
Doli	= The blue bird. (Navaho).
Estsan-atlehi	= Navaho Earth Goddess.
Go-hé-yahs	= Spirit People, or mediators between earth people and the Sun Father.
"Han-na-di Set-en-dah-nh!"	= Te-hua ceremonial beginning of a legend or sacred myth story.
Hopi or Hópitû	= The desert people of Tusayan, often named Moki or Moqui by outsiders or tribal enemies.
Ho-tiwa	= Arrows (being) made.
Kat-yi-ti	= Cochiti Pueblo, N. M.
Ka-yemo	= Falling leaves.
Kah-po	= Santa Clara Pueblo, N. M.
Ki-pah	= A legendary civilizer and prophet of Te-hua people.
Kat-yi-mo	= The solitary "Mesa Enchanted," three miles north of Acoma.

Kā-ye-povi = Spirit Blossom.
Kā-ye-fah = Wings of the Spirits.
Koh-pé = Red shell beads.
Khen-yah = Shaking trail.
Lé-lang-ûh = The Spirit Leader of the Flute Ceremony for rain in the desert. He was the first to make prayers through the reed to the Spirit People of the Elements. The gods granted the prayer, and the Sacred Order of the Flute was instituted. It exists to-day in Tusayan.
"Lost Others." = Those who have gone from earth life to the spirit land.
Lo-lo-mi. = A Hopi word indicating that all is good or beautiful.—A blessing.
Mo-wa-thé = Flash of Light.
"Mother of the Starry Skirt" = Milky Way.
"Moon of the Yellow Leaves" = September.
Navahu = Navaho, a nomadic tribe of Athapascan stock in Arizona.
Na-im-be = Nambe Pueblo, N. M.
Na-hual = Spirit Ministrant, or unexpressed personal power.
Oj-ke = San Juan Pueblo, N. M.
O-ye-tza = White Ice.
Oh-we-tahnh = Indian writing. (Pictographs)
Pō-sōn-gé = "The river that is great," Rio Grande.
Po-Ahtun = An esoteric cult known from N. M. to Central America. The Lords of the Water and the Four Winds.
Po-Ahtun-ho = The high priest of the order. The spiritual ruler.
Po-se-yemo = "Dew of Heaven." The earth-born Te-hua Christ.
Povi-whah = Moving Blossom.
Po-tzah = White Water.
Po-pe-kan-eh = "Where the water is born." Springs at the foot of Tse-cōme-ū-piñ.
Po-eh-hin-cha = Santa Clara creek, N. M.
Po-etse = Box Cañon, Santa Clara Creek.
Po-ho-gé = San Ildefonso Pueblo, N. M.
Phen-tza = Yellow Mountain.
Piñ-pe-yé = An instrument of grooved stone and a reed, by which astronomical calculations were made by the Milky Way and stars.
Pu-yé. = A cliff dwelling on Santa Clara Reservation, N. M.

Py-otle = A powerful drug known by Indian medicine men from the great lakes to Yucatan.

Quetzal-coatl = A God of Light of Mexico.

Qui-ve ra = A mythic land of gold in the desert.

Queres = or Que-ran-na. An ancient house building people of N. M. Their principal pueblo is Acoma — "The sky dwellings of White."

Säh-pah = The Frost.

Sää-hanh-que-ah = The Woman of the Twilight.

Sea of Cortez = Gulf of California.

Se-po-chineh = The Place of Ancient Fire, a sacred mountain, Mt. Taylor, N. M.

Sik-yat-ki = A ruin in the Tusayan desert, near Walpi, Arizona.

Sten-ahtlihan = The supreme goddess of the Apache pantheon.

Sinde-hesi = The Ancient Father: — the Power back of the Sun.

Shu-finne = A pre-historic cliff dwelling near Pu-yé, N. M.

So-ho-dah-tsa = Dark Cloud.

Ta-ah-quea = The Goddess of the Young Summer.

Tahn-té = Light of the Sun.

Tain-tsain Clan = Antelope Clan.

Te-hua = "Children of the Sun." A house building people of the Tanoan Group, Rio Grande valley, N. M.

Te-get-ha = Taos Pueblo, N. M. One of the best examples of the terraced, five storied, pre-Columbian architecture, still inhabited.

Tiguex = A ruin near Bermalillo, N. M., called by the natives Po-ri-kun-neh: — "the Place of the Butterflies."

Te-tzo-ge = Tesuque Pueblo, N. M.

Tsa-mah = A Te-hua village at the junction of the Tsa-mah and Rio Grande, now Chamita, N. M., interesting as the site of the first colony of Spanish pioneers in N. M. 1591.

Tsa-fah = Chicken Hawk.

Tsė-ye = Cañon de Chelle, Arizona. The home of the Navaho Divine Ones.

Tse-cōme-ū-piñ = A sacred mountain west of Pu-yé, N. M.

Towa Toan Clan = High Mesa Clan.

Tusayan = Province of. A territory in Northern Arizona, now the Hopi Indian Reservation.

Tuyo = The "Black Mesa" of San Ildefonso, N. M.

Ui-la-ua	= Picuris Pueblo, N. M.
Ua-lano	= Jemez Pueblo, N. M.
Walpi	= The ancient stone village of the "First Mesa" in Tusayan.
Yahn Tsyn-deh	= Willow Bird.
Yutah	= Ute, a Colorado tribe of the Shosone linguistic stock.

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